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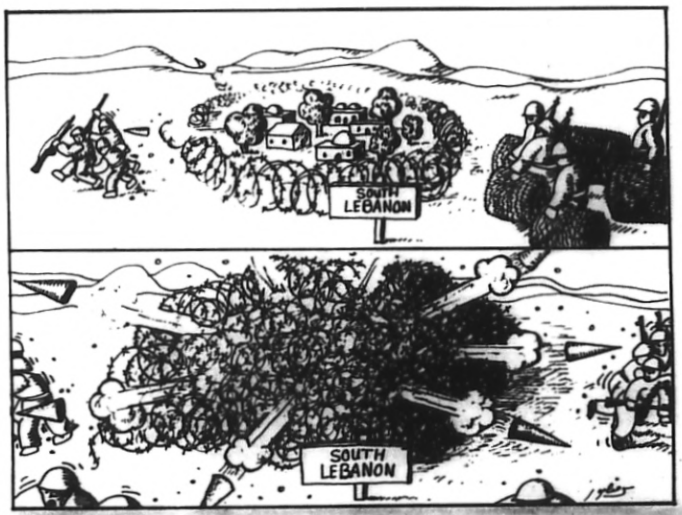
Israel Counters Lebanese Resistance with Terror



Scores of south Lebanon residents were reported killed or wounded this week as the Israeli army significantly increased its repression of the civilian population of south Lebanon to curb Lebanese resistance to its occupation. A dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed indefinitely February 26 on the entire area south of the Litani River and strict restrictions were placed on movement as the Israeli army undertook a wide search-and-arrest campaign. Many houses were reported destroyed and whole families exiled north.

Reports of savage Israeli army activities in the area south of the Litani were received throughout the week. Israeli Knesset member Matti Peled of the Progressive List for Peace distributed a letter to Knesset members demanding a halt in the government's "Iron Fist" policy in south Lebanon. He cited a report from parents of soldiers that Israeli army forces shot and killed 20 teen-aged Lebanese residents near Sidon February 15. According to Peled, the Israeli army arrested twenty 14-year-old children as they walked through the hills towards Sidon. The children, whom the army alleged were carrying light weapons, surrendered but 12 were shot dead. The army spokesperson said that the children were killed when they resisted arrest. Peled told the Knesset that Israeli soldiers had prevented an Israeli medical team from treating the wounded and "finished them off," according to Peled's report.

Lebanese army units engaged Israeli occupation forces February 27 for the first time in over two years when an Israeli jeep attempted to cross Israel's own withdrawal line to reach the Lebanese village of Kawthariya Sayad. The jeep was turned back but returned with several heavy tanks and showered the Lebanese unit with gunfire, causing several casualties. Ambulances were reported seen rushing to the confrontation area. There were no immediate reports available of number of casualties. Israel at first refused to confirm the incident and then later termed it a "mistake" on the part of the Lebanese.

The increased repression in south Lebanon was officially endorsed February 18 by Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Minister Without Portfolio Moshe Arens. Residents were warned through leaflets dropped February 26 by army helicopters that violators of the new regulations "risk their lives." The stringent military orders, in response to increasingly successful resistance attacks on Israeli occupation soldiers (at least 10 dead and 46 wounded in the last six weeks) included a total ban on motorcycle traffic and a requirement that all vehicles travelling on southern Lebanese roads include at least two passengers. Any vehicle found unattended by the side of major roads will be blown up.

The Arabic-language leaflets, received one week after their issue date of February 18, told residents: "It is absolutely forbidden for residents to be outside their villages during the curfew period." Anyone found outside his village would "risk his life."

Foreign journalists based in Beirut reported February 26 that they were banned from entering Israeli-occupied territories in the south. "Journalists arriving from Beirut or from other areas in Lebanon will not be allowed to cross into areas where the Israeli army is currently deployed," said Israeli officials in the Tel Aviv office of the Associated Press, to be relayed to journalists in Beirut.

The restriction on the movement of journalists was apparently to reduce reports on Israeli army activities in the area. Lebanon's ambassador to the United States charged February 26 that Israel is committing widespread "atrocities" in the area it occupies. Israeli official sources admitted to only 13 residents killed and 10 houses razed in response to stepped up resistance against army. The International Red Cross reported February 24 that Israel added 112 Lebanese residents to Ansar prison camp near Nabatiyeh, increasing the number of detained to 1602. Lebanese sources reported that 700 families have been evicted from the south across Israeli army lines in collective punishment for resistance activities.

The United Nations Security Council is scheduled to meet February 28 to discuss the situation in south Lebanon. Lebanese officials who requested the meeting complained that Israeli troops were "storming Lebanese villages, shooting innocent civilians and destroying houses."

The French government called in the Israeli ambassador to complain about remarks made by Rabin to a closed cabinet meeting, terming French UNIFIL forces "bastards" for interfering in Israeli action taken against civilians. French soldiers reportedly tried to stop Israelis from destroying houses in areas under their jurisdiction.

MiXed Reactions To Egypt's Peace Proposal

Mubarak's latest initiative was announced simultaneously with intensified Egyptian-Israeli talks. Special Egyptian presidential envoy Abd al-Halim Baddawi arrived in Israel February 27 and was reported to have had extensive meetings with Israeli officials. Mubarak's political advisor, Usama al-Baz, was reported to have arrived in Jerusalem during the week but there was no official Israeli confirmation of this.

The proposal, which Egyptian President Husni Mubarak outlined in an interview with *The New York Times*, calls upon the US to invite an Israeli and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation for direct talks followed by an international conference which would endorse any agreed-upon formula. In his interview, Mubarak said that if the US refuses, Cairo could host the talks and promised that "the Palestinian delegation doesn't have to include well-known PLO figures."

Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij and former Gaza Mayor Rashad Shawwa were among the few figures who voiced frank support for the initiative. Shawwa claimed in an interview with *Al Quds* Arabic daily February 28 that "all Gazans became optimistic" after hearing about the initiative.

Local newspapers were divided on the agreement. *Al Fajr* daily voiced cautious support for the proposals. In an editorial February 27, *Al Fajr* Arabic daily said that the Egyptian initiative must be studied and discussed thoroughly. The paper called on the Palestinian leadership to use the opportunity provided by the initiative to advance the Palestinian cause. The pro-Jordanian *Al Quds* daily gave complete blessing to the proposals and published on its front page the opinions of local figures who supported the proposals.

Arab Reaction

The strongest outside attack on the initiative came from Syrian President Hafez Asad and his guest, Democratic Yemen President Ali Nasser Mohammed. In a statement after his arrival to Damascus, Mohammed described the initiative as one of the surrenderist solutions which US imperialism and its reactionary Arab agents are trying to impose on the Arab world.

Jordan indirectly voiced support to the initiative. *Al Quds* daily quoted a Jordanian diplomatic source as saying that the initiative could be an outlet to the Middle East deadlock. The source also said that the Israeli acceptance of the initiative might allow Jordan to participate in the talks. The sources added, however, that Jordan insists on the PLO's participation in the proposed talks.

On the international level, the Soviet Union rejected the proposals. In a statement issued

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"They Shot At Those Who Had Surrendered..."

"On February 15, 1985, there was a news item about a skirmish between Israeli army forces and what was described as a 'terrorist band'... Eleven members of the band were killed in the skirmish and the Israeli army did not suffer any casualties.

"In the meantime, we have been hearing quite a bit about Israel's 'strong-arm' policy in the occupied territories and in Lebanon.

"A group of parents of soldiers conveyed the following information to us regarding the abovementioned 'skirmish,' after hearing the accounts given by their sons who had just returned [from Lebanon.] Here is what happened, in the words of the parents:

" 'On Thursday, February 14, before noon, a Golani unit stationed at the top of a hill discovered a group of 20 armed Arabs marching along the *wadi* in the direction of Sidon.

" 'The soldiers contacted their regimental commander (whose name we have) and he issued the following order: 'Wipe them out.' The soldiers fired five tank rockets at the group, hitting some of them, and then opened fire. The Arabs tried to return fire — and immediately surrendered. According to the Israeli army soldiers' testimony, they were not trained or ready for battle.

" 'When the Israeli army soldiers got down to the bottom of the *wadi*, an Israeli army medic tried to treat the wounded. His friends interfered and shot at those who had surrendered, injuring a few more of them. Later, some of the soldiers maltreated the corpses. The medic (whose name we have) threatened his friends, telling them not to interfere with his work. He said to one of them: 'If you interfere, I'll smash your balls.' Throughout the exchange, he did not stop treating the injured Arabs.

" 'Of 20 Arabs, only eight remained alive. When they reported [the incident] to their regimental commander, he asked: 'What, didn't any of them try to escape?'

" 'According to the soldiers, the unit commander had been with their regimental commander when he gave them his instructions.

" 'A short while later, the soldiers were told by their officer that 'there are norms and there are norms. This norm is appropriate for Lebanon, but not for Israel'..." (Translation: Al Ittihad, HaAretz, February 28, 1985)

Israel Human Rights League Protests Conditions at Fara'a Camp

Reports of inhumane conditions in Israeli security prisons continue to attract public attention and occupy front page space in local newspapers.

The Israeli Human Rights League sent a telegramme to Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin February 24 demanding that he order medical examinations for Palestinian political prisoners in al-Fara'a detention centre in Nablus following reports of widespread diseases among them, particularly skin diseases. The telegramme said, "We wanted to draw your attention to the *status quo* so prisoners receive medical treatment before the disease spreads beyond control." Al-Fara'a is a political detention centre for Palestinians under direct control of the Israeli army.

Al Fajr Arabic and *Al Sha'ab* dailies reported February 26 that Jerusalem advocate Jawad Boulos visited Fara'a February 21. Afterwards he spoke of "extremely harsh conditions at the prison and clear violations of international laws."

According to the papers, Boulos had witnessed severe overcrowding in prison cells "so crowded that prison authorities put up several tents within prison walls to house 25 new prisoners," the papers reported. Considering the latest snow and rain storms that have drenched the area, Boulos said that the prisoners' conditions are "indescribable."

"The occupation authorities are holding several teen-aged prisoners, mostly under 15-years-old. They are interned with older prisoners, which constitutes a violation of international laws governing prison conditions," the papers quoted Boulos as saying.

Boulos, who has 12 clients at Fara'a, had met with 14-year-old Iyhab Jaradat, who told him that Israeli intelligence officers had tied his hands high on a wall for three consecutive days to force him into signing fictitious confession papers. The papers did not elaborate.

As for health conditions, Boulos reported that the prisoners' health is deteriorating because of the total absence of hygiene and adequate medical care at Fara'a. He asserted that several prisoners are plagued with a skin disease that has spread over their faces, necks and upper chests, and may soon infect the rest of the prisoners. "Prisoners are forced to shave daily using the same blade," the papers reported. "The prisoners' diet is not at all sufficient. The meals are offered in small quantities and their content does not vary. The prisoners are extremely angry at this and other conditions and the atmosphere is potentially explosive," said the papers' reports.

Boulos had intended, according to the papers, to meet with the West Bank prisons administration authorities and government legal advisors to demand a solution to prison problems, especially the housing of prisoners in tents under severe weather conditions, the imprisonment of teenaged Palestinians, and the deterioration of health and hygiene at Fara'a.

In other related news, *Al Fajr* Arabic daily reported that Neve Tertza prison authorities had refused to allow relatives to bring gifts to all the women prisoners on the occasion of International Women's Day, March 8.

This was learned, according to the paper, from Nazareth advocate Walid Fahoum, who has several clients in the Ramle prison. A group of Israeli women who call themselves "Women Against the War in Lebanon" had also intended to send gifts to the Palestinian political prisoners at Neve Tertza but were also prohibited from doing so. (Translation: Al Fajr, Al Sha'ab, February 26, 1985).

UNRWA Briefs Funders on Deficit

UNRWA is keeping governments, development funds, and voluntary agencies fully informed of the Agency's critical financial situation and the United Nations secretary-general, Javier Perez de Cuellar, has written to heads of governments asking for increased financial aid to UNRWA

Cuts of US$40 million made in the 1985 budget still left a gap of US$27 million between the estimated income and the minimum expenditure needed to prevent cuts in the Agency's education, health and welfare services.

In January, Commissioner-General Olof Rydbeck spoke to the Council of Europe's Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography in Paris. On January 21, the deputy commissioner-general, Robert Dillon, discussed UNRWA's financial needs with Prince Talal, President of the Arab Gulf Programme for UN Development Organisations in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Comptroller Edward Gregory has gone to Washington to discuss UNRWA's finances and will attend a meeting of the UN General Assembly's Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA in New York in early March.

Dillon intends to visit Washington shortly to brief the US government officials and the commissioner-general will visit host governments and other governments in the Middle East. Mr Rydbeck will be visiting Sweden on February 27 and plans to go to Japan in the spring, and on March 26 in Vienna, UNRWA is planning a meeting with permanent missions and observers accredited to the United Nations at the Vienna International Centre.

Nationalists Gather in Jerusalem To Honour Qawasmeh

The commemorative gathering of Palestinians from all parts of Palestine honoured Palestinian leader Fahd Qawasmeh February 22 at Ibrahimiyeh College hall in Jerusalem. Some nationalist figures who delivered speeches to honour the assassinated Hebron mayor called on consolidating an initiative from the occupied territories to maintain the unity between all of the PLO factions. The initiative, proposed by Saleh Baransi, a veteran Palestinian national activist from Taibeh in the Triangle, called for the convening of an 18th Palestine National Council on the basis of the Aden-Algiers Accords.

After playing the Palestinian anthem and hoisting the national flag, the festival began with one of the two masters of ceremonies reiterating the slogan of "No Negotiations, No Recognition, and No Compromise." Those in attendance responded by clapping and singing national songs.

Zuhair Dib'i delivered the speech of Hebron's Deputy Mayor Mustafa Natshe in which he praised the late mayor of Hebron as a militant fighter in all arenas of the struggle. He noted Qawasmeh's local political history, including his role in the National Guidance Committee. In the text, Natshe also backed the Palestinian-Jordanian agreement and termed it a "positive step towards the objective of self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

Speaker Lutfi Laham from Jerusalem stressed the national unity between Muslims and Christians. "We want our Palestinian cause to be free, honourable, and to remain alive," Laham said. Tawfiq Zayyad, Knesset member from the DFPE and mayor of Nazareth, addressed the gathering, which spilled over from the hall to the school corridors and squares: "The Israeli occupation is the main factor responsible for Qawasmeh's assassination," he said. Zayyad expressed a wish "to commemorate Qawasmeh in East Jerusalem, the capital of the future Palestinian state." The Nazarene also confirmed that "after 17 years of occupation, the enemy has failed to create an alternative leadership." Zayyad backed the proposal of an international conference to solve the Palestinian problem. MK Mohammed Mi'ari, head of the Progressive List for Peace, praised the Palestinian leadership and called Qawasmeh one of its prominent leaders. Mi'ari also spoke about last week's commemoration of Qawasmeh in Nazareth, which the PLP hosted, and about the Israeli authorities' demand that the Palestinian flag be taken down.

Qawasmeh's daughter, Sahar, delivered a eulogy expressing her feelings on the death of her father. "The soul of my father will hover high in the skies of Acre and al-Quds," she said.

Teacher Taher Nammari, speaking for Ramallah's dismissed Mayor Karim Khalaf, stressed that "we will remain loyal to his path of struggle and to his victorious march."

The well-known Palestinian poet Samih al-Qasem recited a powerful poem against Kahane and his followers. The audience responded with extended applause and asked for an *encore*.

Amin Khatib, chairperson of the Federation of Charitable Societies, delivered a short speech praising Qawasmeh "who carried the cause of his people in his heart throughout the world."

Mohammed Kiwan, the representative of Abna' al-Balad movement, called for restoring unity between the PLO factions by reopening the dialogue between the Democratic Alliance and Fatah on the basis of the Democratic Alliance's recognition of the 17th PNC session.

The last speaker, Fayez Qawasmeh, eldest brother of Fahd Qawasmeh, told the gathering, "The Palestinian people will continue to fight to implement Fahd's principles and aspirations."

THIS WEEK'S CENSORSHIP

Following is a breakdown of censorship cuts for issue 252, March 1, 1985:

Number of original articles submitted to censors 7
Number of articles totally censored out 2
Number of articles passed 5

Israeli Solidarity Group Demonstrates Outside Dheisheh

Fifteen members of the Bir Zeit Solidarity Committee demonstrated outside Dheisheh camp February 23 in protest of the continued detention of 35 camp residents and the deliberate transformation of the camp into a ghetto. A special appeal was made for the immediate release of Palestinian journalist Hamdi Farraj.

The demonstrators, who were dressed in prison uniforms, were asked by Israeli soldiers to leave the area but they refused. Later an army officer arrived with a piece of paper declaring the area a "closed military zone" and ordered the protesters to leave. The protesters walked by foot to the nearby army headquarters and demanded to visit a number of Dheisheh prisoners who were held there. The army refused and the demonstrators were forced to leave.

The Bir Zeit Solidarity Committee had also sent a letter to the Israeli Journalists' Association February 7 asking them to intervene with the Israeli authorities on behalf of journalist Farraj. In their letter, the committee told the IJA that "freedom of expression cannot be selective."

Gideon Spiro, spokesperson for the committee, told *Al Fajr* February 23 that to date they had not heard of any action or response by the Israeli Journalists' Association. Spiro attacked the Israeli association because it "turns the world upside down when a Jewish journalist anywhere in the world is harassed but is oblivious to the sufferings of a Palestinian journalist a few minutes' drive from their offices."

Of the 50 Dheisheh residents who were arrested in the military's campaign early in February to appease Gush Emunim's Moshe Levinger and their militant settlers, 35 youths are still in detention. No charges have been levied against the arrestees. Seven of the detainees were remanded over in military court for an additional 50 days.

Dheisheh residents, members of the Committee to Defend Dheisheh Camp, and a representative of the Committee to Defend Palestinian Camps spoke at a Tel Aviv seminar February 23 about Israeli measures against camp residents. In the meeting, Uzi Borstein, secretary of the Israeli Human Rights League, called for a serious effort to form a "wide-ranging Dheisheh solidarity committee from all forces opposed to Israeli occupation."

In other Dheisheh related news, camp residents were concerned that a Ramallah court decision issued two months ago which ordered the closure of a quarry next to the camp as "a danger to the health of camp residents" would not be executed. The residents' concern mounted when a second postponement of a court session was announced February 25 to hear the appeal by quarry owners.

A delegation representing the Democratic Women's Movement of the Israeli Communist Party visited Dheisheh February 23 in order to express solidarity with the camp residents and to find out more details about the actions of the Israeli army and Jewish settlers.

Members of the delegation toured the camp and visited the homes of some of those victimised by the Israeli army. They also met a resident who was recently released from detention.

Samira Khoury, who headed the delegation, told the camp's residents, "We seek a just and lasting peace in the area." Another member of the women's delegation told the residents, "When we visit your camp, we forget our own suffering because your suffering is unbearable."

Another delegation representing the Bir Zeit University Workers' Union visited the camp February 22 and presented a financial contribution to the Committee to Defend Dheisheh Camp

4 Molotovs Hit Israeli Targets

The Qasaba neighbourhood in Hebron was curfewed after a petrol bomb was tossed at an Israeli bus on February 23.

The entire city of Hebron was put under curfew late February 22 following two petrol bomb attacks on Israelis within 24 hours. The curfew was lifted 12 hours later after large Israeli army units searched for attackers and arrested several residents. Thirty stores in the Hebron market area where one of the attacks occurred were ordered closed for two days by order of the West Bank civil administration.

The first petrol bomb was hurled on the afternoon of February 21 at an Israeli military post near the entrance of Hebron's former central bus station, which was taken over by the army over one year ago. The bomb caused little damage and no casualties. The military rounded up several people and took them for questioning.

The following day a bomb was thrown at an Israeli-owned tourist bus in the Hebron market area. There were no reports of damage.

The curfew was imposed following the second Molotov.

In Bethlehem, five residents were arrested following a petrol bomb attack on an Israeli army bus, and in Rafah a police car was hit by a petrol bomb. According to Israel Radio, which reported the Rafah incident, there were no casualties. (Translation: From the local press.)

February 22:

National Unity Day

Under the slogan "Let February 22 Be National Unity Day," an artistic and national festival took place at the Nuzha/El-Hakawati Theatre February 21, despite Israeli police attempts to prevent it. February 22 is the anniversary of the founding in 1969 of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

About a thousand people attended the meeting, despite attempts by Israeli police and border patrols to intimidate theatre administrators and festival attendants so they would call off the event. Soldiers and policemen stood outside the East Jerusalem theatre from midday on and harassed everyone who tried to enter the hall. Attendees' identity cards were taken and their numbers recorded. Policemen attempted to dissuade visitors from attending by claiming that the event due to take place was "illegal." The police and army, however, did not enter the hall and the festival continued. Five guests, including Fadwa Labadi, member of the Women's Work Committee's Executive Board, were arrested and later released.

The festival included performances of national music and folkloric dances by the *Hurriyeh* troupe, from Bir Zeit University, the Red Star group, from the Ramallah Workers' Unity block, the *Bissan* folkloric *dabkeh* group and the Women's Work Committee troupe.

Speakers at the festival praised the national and unifying role played by the Democratic Front. Speakers also insisted on the Palestinian right to self-determination, the right to return, and the right to establish an independent state under a unified PLO.

Speakers pointedly rejected the Reagan plan, the Camp David Accords and the Amman agreement, which they said was based on UN resolution 242. The Aden-Algiers agreement was specified as a basis for safeguarding the national PLO line.

Telegrammes of support arrived at the festival from nationalist Palestinian mayors and other personalities and institutions throughout the occupied territories. A number of the telegrammes specifically called for unity in order to defeat the February 11 Arafat-Hussein agreement.

At the end of the festival, plaques were presented to families of martyrs and prisoners as a token of appreciation for their national efforts. Among the prisoners who were given special note was Omar al-Qasim, member of the DFLP Central Committee who is serving a 30-year sentence since 1969 and is currently held at Nafha jail.

After the festival, participants went home quietly and police refrained from harassing them

Arsonist Hits Ramallah Civil Court

A petrol bomb was thrown into an empty Ramallah district civil courtroom February 20 causing a small fire and damage to a number of files. The fire was quickly discovered and extinguished, but the arsonist escaped.

It was the third sabotage of a West Bank Arab court in the last two months. A large fire in the Nablus district court building December 20 destroyed thousands of files and important court land documents dating back centuries. Bethlehem district court was vandalised two weeks ago when thieves broke into the courtroom and stole a safe containing a large number of files and documents. No arrests have been reported in any of the three cases. A Ramallah police official told *Al Fajr* that police are searching for clues to connect the three attempts. He gave no further details.

After the Nablus court fire, West Bank lawyers called for a special investigative committee to be set up and for an increase in police protection around West Bank courts, but so far nothing has materialised. A statement published by lawyers last December pointed out that most of the 15,000 files burned in the Nablus fire dealt with fraudulant land deals and disputes between West Bank landowners and Israeli real estate companies or their agents. The statement said that the loss of these legal files will benefit Israeli real estate companies most, "since many cases were decided against them but have not yet been executed." The arson will "give them enough time to change facts on the ground before landowners can come up with new documents proving their ownership of property," the lawyers' statement warned.

Thousands of dunums of West Bank land are at stake as a result of the three crimes against the courts and, according to Ramallah advocate and former judge Nabil Mushawar, Israeli authorities are deliberately neglecting protection for West Bank courts. In a statement published in *Al Quds* February 24, Mushawar said that "a grave danger to people's rights and to the justice system as a whole is imminent unless courts are protected." He added that "it is imperative that the people demand an end to crimes against courts. Authorities have deliberately ignored the issue, but the people cannot afford to."

'Struggle'85 Protests Funds for Settlements

"Aid for Impoverished Communities, Not for Settlements" was the slogan of over 100 angry demonstrators who despite below-zero weather and falling snow demonstrated for several hours in front of the Israeli prime minister's office February 26. The demonstrators — composed of Israelis and a few Palestinians from inside the 1948 borders of Israel who are members of "Struggle '85," a recently formed protest movement — used loudspeakers and banners to demand that government money allocated for Jewish settlements in the occupied territories be given to impoverished communities and little-supported development towns.

The Israeli government has allocated US$30 million to settlements in this fiscal year: included in this is US$3.6 million for the construction of new settlements in the occupied territories.

According to a speech delivered by a founder of Struggle '85, MK Charlie Biton, the newly announced Israeli government budget will put a larger burden on Israel's poor: "It is expected to push unemployment up to 150,000 in addition to the rising inflation and decrease in social welfare spending.

"The current policy of this government is based on increasing war effort spending, prolonging occupation of Arab territories, and ignoring the country's poor; it is a policy that obstructs progress towards peace in the Middle East," Biton told the sidewalk audience.

Biton, a member of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, formed Struggle '85 to "fight social injustice, widespread poverty, and racial discrimination against Oriental Jews and Arabs," he announced in his inaugural address January 29.

MK Tawfiq Toubi, also of the DFPE, was on hand for the demonstration outside Peres' office. Toubi congratulated the demonstrators for their "effort to stand up for the poor of this country" and offered his full support for the new movement and its goals. Toubi is number-two man in the Israeli Communist Party, Rakah, which dominates the DFPE.

As for future plans for Struggle '85, Oriental community activist Sa'adia Marciano told the protesters that the movement will do what needs to be done to fight racism and anti-Arab policies in Israel: "We will stand with any Arab community threatened by people like Kahane."

The demonstrators shouted slogans demanding the immediate resignation of Shimon Peres, calling his coalition government a "disaster government."

Arab Hebrew University Students Disrupt Speech by Fascist Yazbeck

After a long period of calm, violence returned to Hebrew University's Mount Scopus campus on Wednesday night. About 100 Arab students prevented *Gilad* — a right-wing student group affiliated to the Likud and Tehiya — from holding a meeting with Pierre Yazbek, the local representative of the Lebanese Forces in Israel. The incident evoked the period in which fist fights between rightists and leftists were a daily occurrence on campus.

Yazbek had been invited to speak at the university a number of times in the past, but each time the meeting was called off at the last minute. However this time, the members of *Gilad* decided to hold the meeting on Wednesday, February 20, come what will. The Arab Students' Committee reacted by informing the dean of students that they would not allow Yazbek to speak at the university. The day before his appearance, Anwar Daoud, a member of the National Committee of Arab Students, said: "Hundreds of my people died at Sabra and Shatila. My conscience will not permit me to allow this man to speak."

The Arab students promised and they delivered. At first they prevented Yazbek from speaking by chanting, singing, and hurling catcalls in his direction; later on in the evening, they resorted to force.

An hour before the meeting was to get under way, scores of Arab students filled the hall. The small group of Jewish students who had come to hear Yazbek were clearly outnumbered.

Usama Sa'adi, a member of the Arab Students Committee, said an hour before the meeting was to get under way: "Yazbek will not utter a single word here tonight. If they want to take me out [of the hall] they'll have to take him out first."

Ahmad Nazzal, the chairperson of the committee, said: "A man who represents fascist gangs and whose hands are stained with blood should not be allowed to speak here."

Aharon Ita, one of the leaders of *Gilad*: "We invited Yazbek and he will speak, even if force has to be used and even if we have to wait until tomorrow to hear him."

That's how things stood as the meeting was about to get under way. At a few minutes past 9:00 pm Yazbek entered the hall and the ruckus commenced. About 100 Arabs got up and in keeping with a pre-arranged plan, proceeded to sing Arabic love songs. A few of them cursed Yazbek and as the love songs gave way to nationalist songs, the Arab students began chanting: "Yazbek Go Home, Sidon Has Been Liberated" and "Fascism Shall Not Pass."

Some threw an egg at Yazbek from the exit, and obscene gestures were made for his benefit. It was only a matter of time before violence broke out, and although tempers had begun to flare, the university security men, policemen, and border guards posted outside the hall were unwilling to intervene. The right-wingers decided to take matters into their own hands and a religious student, who was later identified as a Kahane supporter, grabbed hold of a fire extinguisher and tried to douse the ardour of the Arab students. It didn't take long before a scuffle broke out.

A Jewish student who was arguing with an Arab student was punched in the face and a fist fight broke out between the two sides. Only then did the university security men decide to intervene, removing one student from each side, two-by-two. The Jerusalem police chief and the commander of the border guards arrived on the scene but both refused to intervene unless things became serious. The Jewish students went into an uproar. One of them began to scream, "The state is being destroyed in there and nobody is prepared to lift a finger." She then sat down on the floor and began to cry.

By that time, the PLO anthem [Palestinian national song — ed] was being sung inside the hall and the right-wingers were trying to silence the Arab students. There was another scuffle and suddenly an Arab student yelled: "He's got a knife! He tried to threaten me with a knife. They want to kill us!" It's an old ploy — and both sides pounced on it.

Pandemonium broke loose and the police and border guards entered the hall and evicted the Arab students by force. At 11:30 pm Pierre Yazbek finally spoke. The hall was almost empty, save for the small group of Jewish students listening to his address. A bloodstain on the floor bore witness to the violent events of the night. (Translation: Kol Yerushalayim, February 22, 1985)

Hakawati Harassed On Eve of Show

Jerusalem police tried to close a show scheduled for February 21 at the Nuzha/Hakawati theatre by intimidating theatre administrators the night before the show and harassing those who came to see it the next day.

Six plainclothes policemen broke into a rehearsal for a new play by El-Hakawati Theatre company February 20 and asked the six founding members of the theatre to accompany them to police headquarters. Hakawati actors who were rehearsing in their costumes refused to go unless police presented an arrest order. The police said they merely wanted the six administration members, Francoise Abu Salem, Radi Shehadeh, Edward Muallem, Jackie Lubeck, Ibrahim Khalyleh and Daoud Kuttab, to accompany them to police headquarters for a "ten-minute talk."

At the Moscobiya detention centre, after a two-hour wait, police officers read a warning to the theatre administrators that the event scheduled to take place the following day was "illegal." The police, who said they would hold Hakawati members personally responsible, did not specify what the event was or why it was declared "illegal." The six theatre members refused to sign the warning and were released immediately afterwards. After their release a spokesperson for the group told *Al Fajr* the police action was aimed at intimidating them so they would cancel the event scheduled for the following day. "We will not act as censors and policemen, checking every word to be said and investigating each group," said actor Radi Shehadeh.

Lawyers for the Hakawati Theatre insist that the decision of the El-Hakawati administrators was totally within the law. No permit is needed for a one-time show inside a closed hall, they said.

Police attempts to intimidate hall owners in the Jerusalem area are not new. Cinema owners have repeatedly been warned in the past not to rent out their halls unless they check first with the police. As a result of these police pressures, all cinema owners refuse to rent out their halls to any Palestinian institution.

The Israeli Performing Artists Association sent a telegramme to Israeli Education and Culture Minister Yitzhak Navon February 24 denouncing the arbitrary actions against El-Hakawati. The telegramme from the 1500 strong artists union demanded that the authorities allow El-Hakawati to carry on their work without interference. Copies of the telegramme were sent to Police Minister Haim Bar Lev and West Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek.

Shawwa's Gaza Bank Gets More 'Promises'

After three years, the chairperson of the board of the Bank of Palestine received assurances February 23 from Israeli Prime Minister Peres, Defence Minister Rabin, the Bank of Israel, and the Israeli coordinator of activities that they will "soon deal with the bank's request to deal with foreign currency."

The Bank of Palestine in Gaza, which was allowed to reopen late in 1981 after a 14-year closure, was ordered in 1981 not to deal with foreign currency or to open any branches other than its main downtown Gaza office.

Hashem Shawwa, chairperson of the board at Bank of Palestine, told *Al Fajr* that the Israeli authorities have used every trick they can in order to delay responding to the bank's legitimate request. An appeal filed in the Israeli High Court three years ago has still not been decided. Shawwa said that after the question of the bank's name was resolved, the Israeli authorities returned and wanted the bank to change its name all over again. "They want us to call it 'Renaissance,' which is the name of Geula Cohen's ultra-right-wing Tehiya Party."

Shawwa feels that the replies from the Israeli officials are designed to delay the issue further. The Israelis don't want the bank to expand but dare not reject its legitimate requests, he said.

The Bank of Palestine's total assests as of the end of 1984 were 4,677,855 Egyptian pounds. Stockholders have been rewarded 3.2 pounds in dividends for every 10-pound share, an annual profit of 32%.

Israelis Use Force To Protect Kahane at H.U.

Six Palestinian students were arrested and a dozen others were slightly wounded when Israeli border guards used brute force to break up an Arab-Jewish demonstration at Hebrew University February 28 to protest racist Meir Kahane's provocative visit to the Mount Scopus campus.

Kahane and a number of his supporters came to the university with placards reading: "Palestine Is Jewish," "Arabs Out" and other racist slogans. Immediately, Palestinian and Jewish student demonstrators chanted slogans against Kahane and fascism, and threw eggs at the MK. Then tens of mounted border guards galloped into the midst of the demonstration and started beating the Arab students with clubs. Student Hatem Yassin, whose head was swollen from beating, told *Al Fajr* that he was surprised by the response of the border guards and the brutality which they used. He added that there was no need for such an "undemocratic and inhumane response because nobody violated any orders."

The Dawn

AL FAJR

AL FAJR – Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly

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Fight For Survival

Israeli occupation authorities issued a set of orders this week for the population of south Lebanon imposing a dusk-to-dawn curfew; banning walking or vehicle transportation between cities and villages at night; banning usage of motorcycles at all times; banning driving cars carrying only the driver; and threatening to destroy any car left without a driver on a sidewalk. In addition, the Israeli army has been busy raiding villages, searching and sometimes destroying houses, killing and injuring dozens of Lebanese and arresting hundreds of civilians.

According to Israeli politicians and army officials, these measures are part of a new policy aimed at reducing casualties in the ranks of the occupation army caused by the southerners' resistance to the thirty-two-month-old foreign occupation of south Lebanon.

Israeli policy-makers are trying to defy history's logic. All nations that were subjected to foreign occupation have resisted. Some achieved their victory and expelled the foreign occupiers while others continue their legitimate struggle toward victory. Inhumane repressive measures never stopped a free-spirited nation from achieving their goals in sweeping away foreign boots from their soil. Western imperialist governments in Europe and America have had their share in Vietnam, Campuchea, Angola, Democratic Yemen, Cuba and Nicaragua.

Lebanon is no exception. Even when Israel tampers with facts and calls the legitimate Lebanese popular resistance "Shi'ite terrorism," facts will continue to stamp their fingerprints on the illegitimate reality of occupation. All these Israeli terroristic measures in the south will not make occupation safe for the occupiers. Regardless of the military power against it, the southern Lebanese will gain their freedom. They are fighting to survive now and in the future.

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King Fahd Visits Washington

King Fahd gave his speech last week at the White House, but went home empty-handed.

by Ghassan Bishara
Our Washington, DC Correspondent

Whatever King Fahd may have had on his agenda for discussions with his American "friends," credible news reports from various officials in this city painted a less than rosy picture for the results of the discussions. The administration, bending under the pressures of the Israeli lobby, suspended the sale of American weapons to moderate Arabs in the region, one item on King Fahd's list, and stuck to a long-familiar policy of throwing the ball into the Arabs' court so they would have to make the next move.

According to a recent statement released by the Saudi Embassy in Washington, the US "has been the kingdom's largest trading partner ever since World War II." A State Department source described Saudi-US relations thus: "We have a very sophisticated and complex relationship with the Saudis that covers a whole range of issues. " The ties go all the way back to 1919, when Faisal Ibn Abd al-Aziz met US President Wilson in Paris and was reportedly impressed with Wilson's belief in decolonisation and the right of peoples to self-determination. The ties were strengthened in 1933 when Standard Oil of California was granted a concession to drill for oil in the kingdom. Eventually, the relationship produced the oil giant ARAMCO (Arab-American Oil Company) and frequent multi-billion dollar deals between the two countries. American exports to Saudi Arabia grew from US$442 million in 1973 to US$7.9 billion in 1983.

US Bends to Israeli Lobby

Only 10 days prior to the king's arrival in Washington, the US announced a temporary freeze on all new arms shipments to Arab states, pending the completion of a policy review. This effectively put the Saudi request to purchase 40 additional F-15's on hold.

Details on the last Saudi request to purchase American weapons came to light when, at a press conference on King Fahd's visit, the US State Department spokesperson praised the "continuing dialogue" betwen the two countries which includes a "close security relationship." The spokesperson continued, "It is correct to say that an arms package to enhance Saudi defence capability has been under consideration" by the Reagan administration. As usual, however, the news about the Saudi "arms package" set the opposition in motion and once again it was fully successful. "Avoiding a clash... with those in Congress who oppose" the Arab countries, the administration "decided last week that it was better to alienate Saudi Arabia than Congress," *The New York Times* wrote on February 3.

The news about the halt on the arms sale to Saudi Arabia and other "moderate" Arab countries was making headlines in the American press while Israeli Defence Minister Rabin was still in the US. Rabin came to ask for an increase in US military grants to his country and received US$400 million over the amount allotted for fiscal year 1985, to a total of US$1.8 billion for fiscal year 1986.

The State Department source stressed the excellent relations between the two countries and dismissed local rumours that the king was about to cancel his planned visit because of the "policy review." *The Washington Times* ran a headline on its first page that read: "Saudi King May Cancel Trip If US Refuses Arms Sales." Both American and Saudi officials denied any tension between the two countries. American officials went out of their way to explain that the review of US arms sales policy to Arab countries doesn't mean the US won't eventually sell the Saudis what they want; it is only a temporary halt on arms shipments. Prince Bandar, the Saudi ambassador to Washington, told *The Washington Times* that "this nation is satisfied with prospects for an arms package."

"Ahlan Wa Sahlan" But No More...

Despite cancellation rumours, King Fahd arrived in Washington and was welcomed at the White House with the Arabic words "Ahlan Wa Sahlan" from President Reagan.

Michael Hudson, director of Georgetown University's Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies in Washington, DC, told *Al Fajr* in a phone interview that the "review" of arms sales to the "moderate" Arabs did not come as a surprise to the Saudis. "According to my Saudi sources," Hudson said, "... they were forewarned that Murphy (of NEA) was going to to go to Congress and say we are holding off on weapons decisions for a few months." His "guess" was that the "Saudi leaders accepted the argument," and that it would be "extremely difficult politically for Reagan to get into a bruising arms battle now" with the Israeli lobby and their supporters in Congress. Hudson, however, sensed that the administration in Washington "wants to treat the Peres government with kid gloves," so as to relay satisfaction with the Labour government compared to the Likud.

"My supposition," Hudson added, "would be that the Saudi leadership understands this kind of an argument." But he rejected the idea of a possible trade-off of Saudi patience and understanding now for Israeli compromise later.

It didn't take very long for Georgetown's professor to be proven right. A senior administration official said that in the first meeting between Reagan and the Saudi monarch, the issue of arms sales was not discussed at all; nor was it discussed in their second meeting. It immediately became clear from the senior administration official who briefed the press at the White House that in their first and only scheduled working meeting at the time, Fahd and Reagan did talk about bilateral and regional issues, with little emphasis on the Palestinian issue. Asked if the two leaders spent any time

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AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

West Bank University Education and the Needs of the People

by Frank Stone *

Arab contacts with the West have been traditionally, and almost exclusively, controlled by the elite sector of Middle East society. Such contacts are made in order to activate business and commerce, to conclude political deals, sometimes to extend educational facilities. These meeting points do not, of course, demonstrate a deep, serious and essential concern with the great masses of the people who continue to count for little or nothing. The people as a whole has no part in such meetings and little knowledge or experience of such contacts. And if they benefit from the business and political deals or from the Western-inspired educational facilities, they are the last and the least to do so.

It was their realisation of technological and, above all, military weakness that persuaded Arab rulers of the necessity to accept certain influences from the West, including educational change. At the same time, their internal instability, resulting from the lack of authentic popular and proletarian support, drove them to rely not only upon highly modernised armed forces as an instrument of repression — but also to set about creating an urbanised middle class, economically dependent upon an existing regime and intellectually capable of serving it. For both these reasons, higher education was given considerable encouragement in the Arab states: but the educational institutions, the teachers, the students and the curriculum have been, and remain, tightly controlled.

This combination of technological dependence and the need for internal repression of the masses has posed serious problems for educational progress in all Arab states and has given rise to some difficult questions. Should education be completely Westernised and thus divorced from the real life of the masses? Should it be based upon solely nationalist tendencies and thus more or less detached from Islam? All Arab regimes face such dilemmas.

The solutions that have been adopted vary in accordance with the extent to which particular regimes are "progressive." Yet all the solutions share certain characteristics. The mass of the people have not been taken sincerely into consideration and have not found their needs and aspirations fulfilled. Instead, education at all levels, but perhaps most especially at the higher level, has been shaped by conscious political ideology in the interests of ruling bourgeois elites. The ruling elite in any given state might be monarchist and pro-Western, or it might be nationalist and pseudo-progressive: but the difference, for the great majority, cannot be called significant or great.

In the West Bank, however, the situation is in some ways very different. It might even be called unique. The absence of a ruling Arab elite and of controlling political institutions created by Arab society presents great problems and difficulties — yet we must never forget that at the same time this absence offers great possibilities. The continuing expropriation of land by Zionist settlers; the continuing penetration and control of the economy by Zionist capitalism; the non-existence of an Arab government; the continuing inter-rivalries and shifting alliances of right-wing and centrist Palestinian organisations — all these factors inevitably force the Palestinian masses of the West Bank further and further back upon themselves and their own resources and capacities.

This state of affairs surely requires a very great response; and this response is dependent upon many processes. Education is one of the most vital of them. Therefore, the Arab universities of the West Bank, as the highest level of educational institution available to the people on their own soil, have a vital role to fulfill and enormous needs to satisfy. But are they dealing with the problems? Are they grasping the possibilities? Are they in fact capable of rising triumphantly to the great challenge, the great opening that exists — the possibility of assisting the mass of the people to develop fully without the shackles imposed by bourgeois regimes?

The evidence so far leads us in the direction of a bitter conclusion: the universities of the West Bank are doing nothing of the kind. In the absence of a bourgeois Palestinian state they have happily and comfortably accepted dependence upon other Arab regimes. In accepting such a position and the limitations imposed upon them, they cannot truly meet the needs of a struggling people. Thus they are surely failing in a duty of the utmost significance.

How much better than nothing can such a "something" really be? And is the limited bourgeois approach exemplified by this "something" the most that the people can hope for?

II

The correct educational strategy for the Palestinian people could only be the creation and constant strengthening of a dynamic alliance between revolutionary academics, workers and peasants: a true university of the people.

Such an institution, it can be objected, would never be tolerated by the occupiers. But it would not exist as a result of visible buildings to which the people would come. Instead, the educational workers would themselves go to the people and would be rooted in the people's needs. The university would function in camps and on cassettes. Its curriculum and its teaching would spring from the people within a range of academic levels, instead of being copied imperfectly from Western capitalist models.

The neglected education of the people, stifled for centuries and still thwarted today, is a great source of weakness. Their situation, and all too frequently their attitude, reveals that many of them do not have a flourishing mental health. Like fruit trees planted in thin or arid soil, their strength and usefulness do not reach a ripe maturity and a harvest of knowledge and skill for future progress. Instead, their minds remain unopened flowers that do not feel the power of strong light because it does not reach them.

What are the West Bank universities doing about this? The people lack power over themselves and their destiny for many reasons; a flawed and shackled education is one of them. If we find that the people are not truly and constantly encouraged to progress, truly and constantly assisted to do so, but, on the contrary, are held back and hampered, then what are we to think?

Surely we must bitterly conclude that those who are effectively in power (the local leaders who hold office because they claim a responsibility that they do very little indeed to carry out) actually constitute an obstacle and are a weight on the backs of the masses.

Surely we must bitterly conclude that there is no genuine desire and no effective policy to achieve the full development of the people in the acquisition of knowledge and skills and in clarity of understanding.

Can it be that those who have established the West Bank universities — those who fund them from abroad — those who control them day by day, do not wish to march hand in hand with the great mass of the people?

Can it be anything except this?

III

All compromise implies the surrender of certain demands or goals in order to reach agreement with another party. Such compromise may sometimes be justifiable or unavoidable. Yet it is essential to remain true to fundamental principles even when compromise is forced upon us. If we do not keep to this, if compromise amounts to an abandonment of principle, we commit an act of betrayal.

The West Bank universities have compromised in precisely this way. They try to reproduce the features of other Arab universities: control that is authoritarian and dictatorial, yet often muddled and inefficient, exercised by one individual or by a few through an administration selected for compliancy and personal loyalty; lack of full democratic rights for both teachers and students as educational workers; a curriculum that is shaped by fear of popular progress, that is based upon the communication only of carefully selected and controlled information that students have a duty to learn by heart but no right to question; and refusal of cooperative development or sharing of strategies for analysis, understanding, true intellectual enlargement.

These institutions may flatter the vanities of certain leading families which exercise a quasi-feudal authority within them. Certainly they fulfill bourgeois functions determined in collaboration with Arab regimes abroad as a condition of funding. In particular, they facilitate the development of middle-class careerism — the extension of an imperfectly educated section of society at the service of leaders who can never fulfill the needs of the mass of people. Thus these universities seek, consciously and effectively or otherwise, to function exactly like their counterparts in other Arab states. The great opportunities open to them as helpers of the people are smothered.

The teaching of a body of specialised knowledge that is useful and necessary in itself is only one aspect of education. Yet even this is not being carried out in an effective and systematic way by institutions devoted to the needs of a people.

And where are the links between universities and schools? Between universities and factory workers? Between universities and agricultural workers? Where are the cultural and other extra-curricular activities by means of which students might develop more fully? There is no evidence to suggest that the West Bank universities serve the whole community or even fully serve their students.

As for authentic education — for the permanent embodiment, the efficient application and the progressive extension of knowledge in the service of the people and as a real force — we may look to the West Bank universities for this, but we are likely to look in vain.

IV

Education is a process that acts upon us. It changes our intellectual nature and our character in relation to our society. It is a permanent possession — not for the individual alone as the selfish basis of a career but for each living in a community of all. It spreads, as water does, cleansing and strengthening all around it. It is the illumination of a people on the road to freedom and self-power: not something to be controlled by a bourgeois regime or a local elite but truly a great means towards a great end.

The true liberty of the people includes the right, and the duty, to find the correct path together; to learn everything they are capable of knowing and applying usefully; to work for the benefit and advancement of all. If our concept of education does not include this right and insist upon this duty, then our concept is inadequate and incorrect; and our universities are only deception.

Knowledge and understanding are weapons that belong in the hands of the people. Therefore, instead of concentrating on classrooms we should find increasing and effective ways, direct and indirect, of taking those weapons where they are needed — of assisting the people to determine for themselves what they need to know and how they need to learn it, as Communist teachers in Latin America are doing. Universities that are controlled by individuals, that are funded by bourgeois Arab governments, that deny freedoms to those they profess to teach, cannot achieve much, or indeed anything, for the masses. Only a revolutionary and educational alliance of teachers, students and workers can do it.

Resources remain idle while the people continue suffering. The greatest resource of all is their own minds. ■

* *a pseudonym for a foreign lecturer in a West Bank university.*

Ain Karim:
From Palestinian Village to Chic Israeli Suburb

LEFT: Part of Ain Karim village with the Russian Church. CENTRE: Old Palestinian houses in Ain Karim occupied by Israeli families. RIGHT: Ain Karim s Mosque, locked since 1948. Tourists view the site from outside but no worshipper can pray inside./BA photo.

by Awad Abdel Fattah

What was once the Palestinian village of Ain Karim is now a fashionable residence for Israelis. The village was incorporated into West Jerusalem in 1948 after the forced expulsion of its indigenous population of 4500. Ain Karim is hidden among the mountain ridges on the western edge of the city and boasts beautiful views and historical sites. Three convents and churches, one of which was built on a peak, fortress like, testify to the importance of the village in Christian religious history. Christians believe that Christ visited the village and that Zakarias and his son John the Baptist were born there. But today these splendid churches and convents are enveloped in overwhelming silence broken only by the few non-Arabic-speaking Russian and English nuns and monks.

"The churches became museums, after the explusion of the Christian community," said Ibrahim Mattar, a Palestinian economist who has studied the transformation of western Jerusalem's Palestinian villages.

Mattar said the churches are no longer used for worship by a local community; they are visited only by tourists from different world countries. Ain Karim's original Palestinian population, most of whom fled to Jordan, have no physical presence in their village other than frequent visits to their home site.

During *Al Fajr* s tour of the village last week, we spotted a small group of Palestinians near the still-standing village mosque who were concentrating their attention on the water spring flowing from beneath the mosque. They were a family from Ain Karim who live now in Amman. Mahmoud Jaber, head of the family, stood and stared solemnly at the mosque and the square before it. It was his first visit since he was forced to leave with the rest of his village's population. He was 27 years old at the time.

It was a difficult moment for Mahmoud. After he wiped the tears which poured from his eyes, he said, "I have never stopped thinking of my village. Although my financial circumstances in Amman are very good, I am ready to come back now and live in a cave. I now know that my house was destroyed by the Israelis when they paved a street from there. But this doesn't change my determination."

The Arab character of the village has not been obliterated. Its splendid stone-built houses testify to Ain Karim's Palestinian roots and the changes which have been made to some of the houses do not change the original picture of the village. Asked to compare his village with his current residence in Jordan, Mahmoud Jaber said, "The two places are incomparable In Amman, the place, the air — everything is different."

Ain Karim has a striking view which few other Palestinian villages can equal. It spreads in a half-circle shape in a mountainous area. From the village's vantage point you can see through the whole valley, which is divided into terraced plots

But, as with the case of the other Palestinian villages engulfed by West Jerusalem, a number of projects were established on its land. Hadassah Hospital stands on the village lands. "It is one of the major ironies that Yad Vashem, a memorial for the Jewish holocaust, is built on the land of the dispossessed and exiled Palestinians of Ain Karim," said Ibrahim Mattar.

Life Style Before 1948

Ain Karim itself is on at least 600 dunums plus its surrounding agricultural land, estimated at thousands of dunums. According to former residents of the village, most of the land divided into small plots along the slopes of the mountains were made cultivable by the population through hard labour over the years. "The residents of Ain Karim," said Hassan Zughbi, originally from the village but now living in al-Bireh, "cared so much for the land." The former farmer, now a retired employee from the Jerusalem electricity company, added they continued to reclaim new pieces of land using the most primitive of tools to remove rocks.

Most of the mountainous land was planted with olive, almond and plum trees and grapevines; olive production was always dominant. Today only tens of olive trees and a smaller number of scattered almonds testify to what was once the village's prosperous agricultural life. Mahmoud Jaber, pointing with his finger to empty plots of land, said, "All of them were full of trees, but the Israelis have uprooted them and in their place weeds have grown."

Ain Karim was the largest vegetable producer in the area of Jerusalem. This was due, to a great extent, to the abundant water from four surrounding natural springs. The residents had built reservoirs at every spring and irrigated the land through a canal system.

As was the custom in Palestine, the springs were not controlled by individuals but belonged to the entire village population. Water distribution was organised according to an agreement reached among farmers. Each farmer was allocated a limited number of hours to draw from the pools. When one turn was finished, the next farmer would open the canal leading to his plot.

According to Hassan Zughbi, Ain Karim's agricultural products, especially the vegetables were known as the best in the area. They were sent to market, primarily in Jerusalem, on the backs of animals and later by trucks, first used in the village in the late 1930's.

In the village there were also three motor-driven mills to crush grain and press olives. This, added to the developed agriculture, helped make the village an important economic centre for many neighbouring villages which took their crops to Ain Karim to grind their grain and olives.

About 80 percent of Ain Karim's population depended totally on agriculture, according to former residents. The rest worked either in stone-cutting, a widespread industry at that time, in the area of Jerusalem or as employees for the British mandate.

Social Life

It is well known that social relationships in Palestinian villages were strong, but in Ain Karim, given its distinct economic situation which drew many people from other villages, social ties were much stronger. Hassan Zughbi added that relations between the Muslim and the Christian communities were unique The Christian community numbered only a little bit less than the Muslim community.

The village population was divided into four *hamulas* (extended families), and each *hamula* had a reception house where guests from outside the village were received and given dinner and sleeping accommodations. In the reception house, really a large room, the *hamula* members could meet and discuss issues pertaining specifically to the family, like weddings and land cultivation, and settle differences which might occur within the *hamula*. "The reception house," said Mahmoud Jaber, "helped to cement intra-family ties and relations with other people."

Not only economic growth characterised Ain Karim but also educational development. There were a total of five elementary schools in the village; two government schools (one was destroyed and the second is now used by the Israelis as a gallery) and three private schools built by the Christian community during the 1920s. Most of the students who attended the private schools were Christian but Muslim students were also received in these schools, where the Christian religion and foreign languages were taught. After graduating from the villages' primary schools, students would commute to Rashadiya high school near Jerusalem's Old City to complete their studies. The relatively large number of educated people in Ain Karim formed cultural societies for raising the educational and cultural level of the population. The Christian Youth Society and the Muslim Youth Society cooperated with one another but each had its own club where they organised cultural, political and sports activities. Zughbi recalls that these societies played a big role in raising the national consciousness of youth.

Like all Palestinian villages which resisted the British occupation, Ain Karim suffered greatly from the political suppression and restrictive measures carried out by British mandate forces. Many people were imprisoned and houses raided and destroyed for being involved in their national struggle. At the same time that these measures to crush resistance were imposed on Ain Karim residents, the Zionist organisations, given virtually a free hand by the British authorities were preparing themselves to launch their attack on Ain Karim. But despite this overwhelming imbalance in firepower and numbers, the battle for the village lasted several long months. Villagers spared no effort in obtaining light weapons bought through various channels, usually in exchange for their only cash valuables — the jewellery of the women. Most of the villagers actively participated in the fierce fighting in defence of the village and about 50 villagers died in the struggle. But the massacre of 249 Palestinian at Deir Yassin village, only three kilometres away, brought an abrubt end to the Ain Karim defence. As soon as news spread about their neighbours' fate, the horrified population fled eastward, and the village fell to the Zionists only two days after the massacre.

Most of Ain Karim's residents headed immediately for Jordan; only a few tens of families remained in Palestine and eventually they, too, migrated from the economically underdeveloped West Bank to Jordan. Today Ain Karim's refugee population in Amman is estimated at 30,000, according to Mahmoud Jaber. Despite the fact that they don't live in camps, like most of the expelled Palestinians, they still want to come back to their village. Their participation in the 1970 fighting which pitted Palestinians against the Hashemite regime testifies to their identity with Palestine and their strong desire to return. ■

The Palestinian Student Movement in Israeli Universities

Palestinian students at Hebrew University in Jerusalem clashed February 20 with Israeli students who were protecting the Phalangist representative in Jerusalem, Pierre Yazbek.

by Awad Abdel Fattah

In 1959, Palestinian students at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem formed an independent committee to tend to their own affairs — laying the cornerstone of an organised Palestinian student movement in an Israeli university. During the 1960s and early 1970s, the other Israeli universities — Haifa, Tel Aviv, Technion and Beer Sheba — witnessed the formation of similar representative bodies for the Palestinian students. The idea of forming Arab student committees separate from the general Israeli student bodies in the universities was motivated, according to veteran student leaders, by the university administrations' discrimination against Palestinian students — who comprise 10 percent of the student body — in allocating grants and housing in dormitories. The committees were never officially recognised by the administration. With time, the committees rallied most of the Palestinian students around them and organised and led the struggle for their student rights, such as equal grants and dormitory space.

As representatives of a vital sector of an oppressed and discriminated national community, the Palestinian students' committees regarded politics as a subject of major concern. They organised lectures on political and cultural subjects and published single-issue newspapers (skirting licensing and censorship restrictions) to discuss student problems and different political subjects relating to the Palestinian problem.

The increase in Palestinian national consciousness, energised by the momentum of the Palestinian national struggle outside, affected the student movement. Consequently, various political approaches to the new developments emerged in the 1970s and expressed themselves in two very different political factions.

Two Trends

Today, the Palestinian student movement in Israeli universities is rooted to two outside major political parties — the Rakah/Israeli Communist Party-dominated Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE) and the Abna' al-Balad (Sons of the Village) movement. The two parties' student blocs, the DFPE and the Progressive National Movement (PNM), which is politically but not organisationally tied to Abna al-Balad, compete for control of the Arab student committees and each tries hard to sweep all seats on a given committee, using their power of argument to gain student support. Typically, each side also increases its own intra-factional activities as elections approach. But when a new committee is finally elected, both parties accept the outcome, regardless who wins. A victory for one bloc does not mean the dissolution of the other; on the contrary, both continue to function and to educate supporters about their respective political platforms.

Activities which are organised on the eve of every election include distributing leaflets and pamphlets, putting out single-issue newspapers, organising political symposia and lectures and staging cultural activities. On some occasions when the election campaign became unfriendly and heated discussion broke out between the two parties, this was often accompanied by strongly worded leaflets aimed at exposing the shortcomings of each side.

The two student blocs have evolved distinctly different political approaches to the Palestinian issue. The DFPE, which is the student branch of the Rakah-dominated Knesset bloc, advocates a two-state solution for the Palestinian problem with mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO, and regards the political destiny of the Palestinians within the 1948 borders of Israel as separate from that of Palestinians elsewhere.

The Progressive National Movement (PNM), the student bloc of Abna' al-Balad, which boycotts Knesset elections, favours the solution of a secular democratic state in Palestine and holds that Palestinians in Israel are an integral political part of the Palestinian people everywhere. Unlike the DFPE, which recognises the PLO as the representative of Palestinians outside Israel's 1948 borders, the PNM considers that the PLO represents all Palestinians.

The two student organisations crystallised their distinct organisational and political structure only after the mid-1970s. Before that, the political differences between the two were not completely clear and votes for student committees were cast for individuals rather than lists. The rise in international recognition of the Palestinian resistance movement outside, following the 1973 war and the consequent revival of awareness of Palestinian national identity, was echoed among Palestinians inside the 1948 borders of Israel in general and particularly among university students. This development not only encouraged the Palestinian student movement but also triggered heated debates and sharp differences over the conception of Palestinian national identity.

Until the early 1970s, the political line of the Israeli Communist Party, which drew a distinction between Palestinians inside Israel and Palestinians elsewhere, had dominated the scene. Rakah considered the former as Israeli Arabs with an historical and cultural Palestinian heritage. The PNM, on the other hand, rejects this distinction and identify themselves *a priori* as Palestinians only, together with Palestinians everywhere.

The central arena for this political debate was the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, primarily due to its proximity to the West Bank, which facilitated contacts with Palestinian political factions there. The turning point in the definition of the nationalist alternative to the DFPE came when the Hebrew University administration decided to assign Palestinian students to participate in guard duty inside campus in 1976. When nationalist Palestinian students at Hebrew University took the initiative to challenge the offensive measure, a new chapter in the history of the student movement was opened. They refused to comply with guard duty assignments on principle because they perceived the measure as violating their national feelings and Palestinian allegiance. "They wanted us to share their dirty war against our brothers," one of the former PNM-affiliated Hebrew University student leaders, Salim Khamis, told *Al Fajr*.

In contrast, the then-predominantly communist Arab Student Committee took an unclear stand on the issue. They did not attribute much importance to the measure at the time so they were unwilling to resist it. This line was supported and encouraged by senior Rakah leaders.

The nationalist student committee members introduced a no confidence motion in the committee. As a result, the committee was disbanded and new elections were held the same year (1976). The new committee, which ran on a list called the "Group of the Committee" to distinguish it from its predecessor — fought long and hard against the guard order. The communists later joined the struggle, and the university administration was forced to retreat from its decisions.

In 1976, the "Group of the Committee," who later evolved into the PNM, won the support of most of the students at Hebrew University for three consecutive years, during which time a series of strikes, demonstrations sit-ins and political and cultural activities were organised to heighten students' national, political awareness and to achieve student rights. During the period, nuclei of similar nationalist groups emerged in the other Israeli universities, but the nationalist bloc at Jerusalem's Hebrew University remained the strongest of the universities and the most active and influential. Although until 1979 the "Group of the Committee" was not based on a strict organisational programme, it played a wide and effective role in disseminating the idea of Palestinian nationalism versus the class analysis and democratic ideology of the Communist Party.

In 1979, the Rakah student bloc at Hebrew University formed a front analogous to the front formed by the party in 1976, also called the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, with the help of the Israeli Communist Party in preparation for the committee elections that year. Backed by the Israeli Communist Party and its extensive and well-organised support networks, the Front defeated the nationalist group.

Taken aback by this defeat, the group reviewed its experience — until then they had been fueled solely by nationalist enthusiasm — and organised its first conference to lay down a firm foundation for a disciplined national organisation. An executive board and a structured organisational and political programme, officially called the Progressive National Movement, was the result. It later became known as the student branch of Abna' al-Balad, a movement based in Palestinian villages and towns which formed in 1972 and has a similar national ideology and political programme. In the 1980 and 1981 student elections, the PNM took over the committee at Hebrew University, but the DFPE defeated the PNM at Beer Sheba, Haifa the Technion and Tel Aviv. Salim Khamis blamed this on the lack of regional coordination among the PNM branches in the universities.

In 1982, in view of the rise of Kach and other extremist Israeli groups which called for the expulsion of Arab students from Israeli universities, the two parties decided to share the committee seats in some universities, such as Jerusalem and Haifa, which were the main centres for the Israeli extremist groups. The purpose was to encounter the attacks of these groups as a united bloc. But activities only limped along that year, except for a few demonstrations which were organised to protest the lenient policy of university administrations towards members of the extremist groups who attacked Palestinian students. According to Nasser Oun, a DFPE activist at Hebrew University, the unity paralysed the committee's work because it killed the incentive for initiative and competition between the two parties. In the end, he said, it actually added to their political differences.

Therefore, in the following year, 1983-1984, elections for the committees were organised in all the universities on a proportional basis. Except at Tel Aviv University, the DFPE won the majority of seats on the committees everywhere.

In 1984, differences erupted between the two groups at Hebrew University over the internal organisation of the committee. As a result, the PNM boycotted the committee and effectively paralysed its activities altogether. The DFPE took over the committee at Hebrew University, Haifa and the Technion, while the Beer Sheba and Tel Aviv committees were won by the PNM.

Contrasting Approaches

But how did each party's political platform affect its conduct and the way it handled academic and political issues?

In response to this question, Anwar Daoud, currently a DFPE activist at Hebrew University, told *Al Fajr*: "In fact, there were no differences of opinion over the importance of student affairs or the political issues pertaining to our Palestinian people. But the two sides handled these issues in different ways. The PNM was rigid and stubborn in its political conduct. We were more wise and flexible."

The differences over tactics triggered exchanges of accusations between the two groups. While the PNM accused the DFPE of being too compromising and "half-Zionist," the DFPE accused the PNM of being adventurist, immature and unrealistic.

Although PNM leaders widely admit that many of the activities organised by the movement were motivated by nationalist enthusiasm and characterised by inflexibility, "We believe that we gave impetus to the Palestinian students' struggle and their role in the national Palestinian struggle," said Salim Khamis. He added that the Hebrew University administration was forced to retreat on many occasions from its decisions against Palestinian students.

In 1980, for example, when four students were suspended on the pretext that they had demonstrated illegally inside the campus, four demonstrations were organised in less than two weeks until the university administration revoked its decision. At other universities where the DFPE controlled the committees, students who were expelled for similar reasons did not receive similar support and had to sit out the entire suspension period. "We believe," said Suleiman Abu Rashid, "that if the DFPE-controlled committees had acted the same way, the expelled students could have returned to school without having to lose one or two academic years."

The PNM also rejected the preconditions which the administration used to set for Palestinian students using school halls for meeting, like stationing Israeli security guards outside the halls during talks and meetings. But the DFPE did not fight these pre-conditions, so it was given halls more easily. "It's true that we obtain halls more easily, but this is because we use wise and flexible tactics with the university administration," Anwar Daoud told *Al Fajr*. To back up his word, he cited on example: in 1982, the joint PNM-DFPE committee applied for a permit to use a hall for a political symposium at Hebrew University but the university administration conditioned its approval on a commitment from the committee not to "speak against the state of Israel." The PNM members wanted to organise an immediate sit-in at the rector's office, while the DFPE members held that they should continue negotiations with the administration. According to Daoud, the latter tactic proved effective and the condition was finally withdrawn.

The PNM does not vote in the general Israeli student union elections on the grounds that the union, as a Zionist body it can only represent Israeli Jewish students, not Palestinians. "We refused to vote for it and we still maintain the same stand, especially as it was controlled at that time by extreme rightists," Abu Rashid told *Al Fajr*. But the DFPE holds a different viewpoint. They feel they can raise the Arab students' problems in the Israeli Student Union and exert pressure from within to influence the policy of the union in favour of the Arab students.

Arab Students Committee at Hebrew University petitions for reinstatement of Arab students expelled from Beer Sheba University in January 1981./JR photo.

Before 1980, the PNM also refused to cooperate with the leftist Israeli organisation called "Campus," which had branches at all universities. Campus opposes discrimination and favours freedom of speech and movement. At Hebrew University, the PNM would not cooperate with Campus on the grounds that it was a Zionist organisation, while the DFPE was a full member in the organisation and even had considerable weight in it. The PNM changed its stand in 1980 and decided to cooperate with Campus on certain issues, such as free expression and the struggle against fascism. But the cooperation between Campus and the PNM lasted only for a short time. Campus stopped joint activities on the pretext that it was criticised by other Israeli students for joining ranks with an "extreme nationalist organisation."

New List Forces Cooperation

The recent divisions among Palestinians at the national level have effects on Palestinians everywhere, including those living within the 1948 borders of Israel. These divisions have made cooperation at least on a minimum basis necessary between the major Palestinian student organisations. This cooperation was accelerated by the emergence of a new Knesset list in 1984 — the Arab-Jewish Progressive List for Peace (PLP), led by Mohammed Mi'ari, Uri Avneri and Matti Peled. The effect of the list in the student movement was that it joined the two otherwise rival factions, the PNM and the DFPE, in their opposition to it.

The platform of the PLP (it now holds two Knesset seats) states that the Palestinian issue is the crux of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and it can only be resolved by mutual recognition of what it sees as the right of both the Israeli Jewish and the Palestinian Arab peoples to self-determination. It calls for negotiations between Israel and the PLO, as sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians, leading to an independent Palestinian state in the territories occupied in 1967 which would coexist with Israel.

The PLP started activities in the universities on a very low level but which included running for the students committees elections. When it participated in these elections for the first time in 1985, the PLP suffered a crushing defeat in most of the universities except Haifa, where it managed to win two of the eleven seats. In Tel Aviv University it won only 17 votes — far too few to compete for even one seat. The PNM and DFPE won all other seats in university elections. In Beer Sheba the PNM won 4 seats and the DFPE 5; in Tel Aviv the PNM won 5 and the DFPE 4; in the Technion the PNM won 3 and the DFPE 7; and in Haifa the PNM won 2 and the DFPE 7 seats.

Mohammed Shamma, one of the two new PLP members on the Haifa University students committee, outlined his list's political principles, saying that, the list upholds an independent Palestinian state in the territories occupied by Israel in 1967 and struggles for full equality for the Palestinians in Israel.

Both the PNM and the DFPE had condemned the PLP and accused it of trying to split the Palestinians inside Israel. The two parties also strongly objected to the inclusion of Zionist Jews on their list. They termed it a "rightist, reactionary and surrenderist" list "which is trying to turn back the wheel of the Palestinian struggle."

The differences between the PNM and DFPE, on the one hand, and the PLP, on the other, became clear when the PLP supported the convening of the PNC in Amman with enthusiasm while it was condemned by the DFPE and the PNM, which called for the implementation of the Aden-Algiers agreement.

When asked why he became a PLP activist after he was a supporter of the PNM, Mohammed Shamma said that both the PNM and the DFPE had failed to do much for Palestinian students. Most PLP supporters in other universities, unlike Shamma, had previously belonged to the DFPE.

In all these universities, the PNM and the DFPE agreed to work on a joint programme in spite of the fact that they ran for the committee elections as two separate blocs. According to Amir Makhoul, a one of the DFPE leaders at Haifa University, the election campaign was characterised by a highly democratic spirit this year.

New Alliance

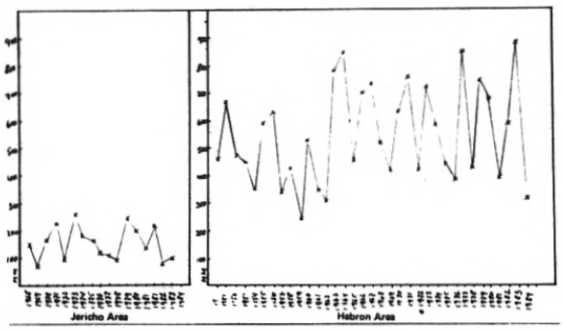
The situation at Jerusalem's Hebrew University was somewhat different. The DFPE and the PNM formed an alliance called the Democratic National Alliance and issued a joint statement outlining their political stands on developments in the Palestinian arena and on the new PLP List. The statement constitutes a minimum basis on which they can work together for one year in the hope of extending ties for a longer time. Neither party compromised its strategic perspective of the final solution for the Palestinian cause. In their leaflets and joint statement, the Democatic National Alliance attacked what it called "the surrenderist sections in the PLO and their tails inside (in 1948 Palestine) represented in the PLP" and called for the implementation of the Aden-Algiers agreement.

The PLP withdrew a week before the date of the elections at Hebrew University because the alliance refused to reduce the number of votes required to win one seat. It described the alliance, in a leaflet, as a conspiracy against it. Still, 71 percent of the Arab students participated in the elections in which only the alliance put up candidates.

The two sides of the Democratic Alliance expressed appreciation for the new level of cooperation and said they hoped it would lead to real unity of the Palestinian student movement in all the Israeli universities. ■

West Bank Weathers Rain Shortage - And Gets Deluge

TOP: Meteorological site in Jericho for measuring rainfall during winter. AO/photo. BOTTOM: Chart showing amount of rainfall in Jericho and Hebron areas.



by Maher AbuKhater

A French philosopher once said that water is not only a source of life, it is life. This was evident this winter in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Until February 15, there was serious fear that available water for drinking and irrigation was simply drying up. At the village of Ain Arik near Ramallah, for the first time in many years residents detected a noticeable decline in the level of water at the village's natural spring, which supplies Ain Arik's population of 2000.

The threat was even more alarming at nearby Deir Ibzi' village. The village gets its annual supply of water from man-made wells that are replenished every year by rainfall. This year the wells went dry. Ain Arik invited Deir Ibzi' to use its spring. The villagers used buckets to draw water to use for drinking, hoping fervently that rain would soon arrive.

In the Hebron area, where farmers rely on rain water to irrigate their land, most of the winter crops have already been ruined. Walid Dasseh, a small landowner from Dura in the Hebron district, told *Al Fajr* that most of the winter vegetables he planted in December and January have been damaged. He said farmers usually plough their land in November and December, expecting that rain will fall during these two months. They also add chemical fertilisers to the soil. If not followed by a heavy watering, this fertiliser burns the vegetables rather than increasing their yield, Dasseh explained.

The rain shortage was so severe until mid-February that it affected the general public as well, especially those who rely on wells for water. For the first time in many years, residents reported that they had to buy water from suppliers to fill their wells and tanks.

The Jordan Valley, a fertile agricultural area with a plentiful supply of water, also was on the verge of reaching a critical stage of water shortage. At 'Oujah spring, one of the largest in the West Bank with a normal water flow amounting to 1800 cubic metres per hour, water was measured at only 155 cubic metres per hour by February 14. 'Oujah waters are used to irrigate thousands of dunums of agricultural land planted with trees and vegetables in the Jordan Valley. The sharp drop in water flow may mean farmers have to give up on their crops this year.

Rainfall in the Jordan Valley is generally much lighter than in the West Bank's hills and valleys. Average rainfall in the Jordan Valley is 120 millimetres per year, while in the Hebron hills it reaches 400 millimetres per year. But the lighter Jordan Valley rainfall is still sufficient to keep water reserves in the springs at a normal level.

The lack of rain also depleted the water levels in the Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberias), which supplies almost every major city. The National Water Carrier, Israel's main water aquaduct, links the Sea of Galilee to a system of water sources that supplies the western and southern areas of the country. The drop in the water table also affected the hygienic standard — for a while, residents who get their drinking water from the Galilee were advised to boil it before drinking.

For Muslim and Christian believers, a dry winter, according to religious traditions, meant that God was "displeased" and inflicting punishment. When December and January, normally the peak of the rainy season, went by without any significant amount of rain, religious leaders called on their faithful to hold special prayers for rain. Prayers were held at several West Bank mosques and churches. In the Muslim prayers, the worshippers intoned: 'Give us rain, remove Your anger from upon us and relieve our suffering.'

On February 12 a weather report said a low pressure cold front that would bring rain and sub-zero temperatures was gradually moving to the eastern Mediterranean area. The news pleased many, although earlier experiences with erroneous weather reports kept people from building up high hopes. On February 5, an earlier weather report had also predicted heavy rains — mistakenly. "Everything was suitable for rain," said Jamil Takrouri, head of the meteorological department in Hebron. "At 5:00 am February 6, temperatures dropped to zero Celsius and relative humidity was measured at 100 percent. Wind was blowing at 12 kilometres per hour and it was saturated with water. The clouds in the sky were the rainy kind. Between 70 and 80 millimetres of rainfall were expected. But all we got was a mere 5 millimetres," said Takrouri.

Finally, Three Days of Rain

But the February 12 weather report was more confident of heavy rainfall. The cold front was slowly moving to the Middle East from Europe, which itself had a very cold winter this year. By Friday February 15, heavy rain started falling on the West Bank accompanied by strong winds. Temperatures plunged to the zero level and farmers expected good news. Three days later, all the West Bank wells were full again and the springs returned to their normal level. With only three days of interrupted rain, the water crisis in the West Bank had come to an end.

"The rain brought smiles back to the faces of farmers and the general public," Dasseh told *Al Fajr*. "It filled all the wells, made drinking water abundant and added to the level of water in the springs," he said. Omar Daoudi, head of the Jericho Cooperative for Marketing of Agricultural Products, added: "The February rains returned the water flow in 'Oujah to 1250 cubic metres per hour. In the Hebron area, where only 115 millimetres of rain had fallen prior to February 1, 283.1 millimetres were reported by February 21.

The water shortage this year would not have been problematic if the area had had a good rainfall last year. But the Hebron area reported only 378.6 millimetres for the 1983/84 winter, below the average of 400 millimetres. Jericho's meteorological department reported 85.4 millimetres of rain for last winter. This winter, Jericho has reported 92.6 millimetres of rainfall by February 20, as compared to the 20.8 millimetres it had reached by February 1. According to Takrouri and to Majed Dajani, Jericho's meteorologist last year's rainfall was one of the worst in recent years.

But the belated heavy rain did not rescue the winter vegetable crop. Unless it is distributed evenly over the winter season, its benefit for agriculture is not as good. Winter vegetables require rain in December and January. If the rain does not come, the vegetables are ruined. On the other hand if heavy rain comes during these months, it may wash the seeds away and this rain is also undesirable. The recent heavy rains were not of any use for the winter vegetables. Olive, citrus and other trees and summer vegetables will benefit the most from it, as will water basins throughout the West Bank, which have been filled. According to Takrouri, rainfall can even come close to 1000 millimetres in some years, more than double the average. But unless it is distributed evenly over the whole winter season, the quantity does not help the crops.

Records for the past 30 years show the amount of rain that fell on the Hebron area has ranged between 200 and 900 millimetres annually. The amount of rain varied every year but it never reached critical points in two consecutive years. In the Jericho area, rainfall was steadier, reaching the average every year. The lowest measured was 62.5 millimetres in 1969/70.

Rainfall is measured two ways at the Hebron and Jericho meteorological centres. There is the old method of collecting rain in a cylinder and measuring the level of water in the cylinder every day. The second method involves using a computerised system which automically records the amount of water that falls into a specially designed cylinder on a graph. The graph rotates at a speed similar to a watch and the amount of rainfall is recorded every minute.

Since 1967, Rain Only Source of Water Left

West Bank farmers have no choice but to rely on rain for irrigation. They would like to use water from local artesian wells and aquifers, but since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank they have not had access to these sources. The northern and central areas of Israel now receive their primary ground water supply from two main aquifers originating in the West Bank. Israel's agriculture requires a minimum of 50 billion cubic feet of water every year in order to continue competing with other Mediterranean countries like Spain and Portugal. The total amount of water Israel uses is not known — it is a "military secret."

Israel's use of West Bank aquifers keeps Israeli cities wet but dries up Arab

continued on page 15

Palestine and Culture

Sabrin's Lyrical Entry Into Palestinian Music

by Said al-Ghazali

Arabs are known to be good listeners and well developed in the habit of listening for rhythms of poetry and music recitals. The union of word and sound and the union of lyrics and music are essential and crucial means used by poets and musicians to please, affect, and win the hearts of people. This is meant only as a necessary prelude for a review of the "*Sabrin*" music group's recently released cassette. The name Sabrin (which means "patience" in Arabic) indicates the group's determination to continue the march of artistic as well as national struggle under the nightmare of Israeli occupation since 1967.

The group was founded by musical amateurs in 1980. What distinguishes Sabrin's musicians and singers from their compatriots in the occupied territories is their insistence on adhering to their principle that music teaches, incites and, simultaneously, arouses the sentiments of "lake dwellers" to the realm of beauty and nature. They have refused to see themselves as political tongues or spokespersons or "reflectors of only one part of reality," which is how Said Murad, one of Sabrin's founders, put it to me. "Our aim is to compose the most artistically developed Palestinian lyric which deal with the Palestinian reality with its contradictions in concrete abstraction. We want to present the Palestinian lyric with uniform artistic sophistication and authenticity."

Murad also told me, "It is not an easy task to find singers and musicians who believe in this idea. The lyrics we choose are an authentic expression of Palestinian conditions and their cultural aspects." Murad talked to *Al Fajr* while he and other members of Sabrin were playing on musical instruments in a hall at the YMCA in Jerusalem.

This year the group recorded eight songs on a 45-minute cassette. More than 4000 copies have been sold.

Sabrin musicians and singers attend three practice sessions every week. The group has spent more than 18 months in training and they recorded an hour in the studio for every minute of their finished cassette. "It cost us US$1800, which we paid from our savings," Murad said.

Five singers and musicians from Jerusalem founded Sabrin in 1980. The group attracted other amateurs, who shared ideas about musical composition and the goal of progress in the art of national music and songs.

Sabrin's founders are shy from publicity, they say, until they can do something "concrete and deserving," Murad told me. The group participated in celebrations in several villages in the Galilee last year and in last year's Bir Zeit cultural festival. They refused to compete for the festival's cultural prize with other musical groups.

"We prefer to work in a collective manner, to maintain the idea of teamwork rather than an individual's work, to keep Sabrin together," Murad asserted.

Critique

After hearing their composition, one musical expert, Lesley Abukhater, wrote some positive and negative points: "They have very good voices and the female soloist is as powerful and clear as the prayer call. The male soloist on one song also is clear and strong. Instruments are very good. It is a nice touch using the *'oud, buzuk* and *kanoun*. The style is similar to Greek music. The drummer is very good. Some of the instrumental solos are more interesting than the vocal ones."

Abukhater pinpointed some negative aspects in the vocal composition. "Although the soloists are good, it gets boring when the style of every song is to have a soloist joined every now and then by a choir. The harmony is not good; it is too heavy and there is not enough to balance it out." Sometimes the rhythm seems uncertain. There is no clear melody in several of the songs. They seem to end abruptly. Their pattern of starting slow and getting faster, then slow again is tiresome through repetition."

"What distinguishes us is the use of the oriental instruments such as drums and tambourines," Murad said. "The talented and skilled musician discovers potential and rich music in these instruments. The untalented musician prefers to use Western musical instruments. The problem is not in the instrument but rather in the player," Murad said. "We want to be closer to our Palestinian culture; therefore, we prefer to use the oriental instruments such as drum, tambourine, *'oud, buzuk*, and *kanoun*," Murad said.

I listened to their vocal composition on the cassette several times and found that the lyrics are simple and strongly effective in their expression and meaning. In "*Jbaineh*" (lyrics written by Hussein Barghouthi) the symbol, Jbaineh, has been taken from the Arabic heritage. Jbaineh has been kidnapped by a hyena and taken to a cave in mountain where she was unable to escape or reach her family. So she told birds to notify her family that she is alive. In the lyrics, Jbaineh is Jerusalem (al-Quds) which resists occupation and its oppression and sends letters by birds to her family abroad. Jbaineh sadly calms her family: "Never mind, the virgin is at the hands of the wolf."

The song "About Wishes," written by Mahmoud Darwish, is a universal poem talking about people who scored national victories — in Algeria, Yemen, Cuba, and Egypt. The poem, concludes: *"Our land is not barren*
Every land has its own birth
Every dawn has its own revolutionary promise."

The song "Drink," written by Samih al-Qassem, challenges the occupation and asserts steadfastness in the land and readiness to sacrifice to defend it: *"My blood sings, drink it."*

In "Love in the Palestinian Manner," written by Abd al-Latif 'Aqel, Palestine is transformed into a woman and the poet is her lover. He is subjected to all types of harassments and oppression of the occupation and still loves her more.

احكي للعالم احكي له
عن سبت كسروا عضلته
عن ماس قتلت رسغه
وحريق أودى بحدقته
احكي عن شاه لم تحلب
عن محجة أم ما حربت
عن بطن طفي امتلأ منه
احكي للعالم احكي له
يا سنبل الحارة المنسية..
الدمعة عندي محجمة
الدمعة عندي معالي
عن باحي الريح المترعة
حنا لا ادكر مساعاتك
لكني انحي كي ادكر
عن طفي جمعة حطواتك
معصور بدرج أو بحصر
كنا ما أحلى ما كنا
يا سنبل الحارة يا حنا
كنا طفلاً واحداً امسا
ضاربنا بالغربة محمولة..
ولقاءً ضاربنا أبدينا
بحبال اللغة محدولة
(سميح القاسم)

The Smoke of Volcanoes

I tell the world, I tell —
About the house whose lamp is broken,
About the axe which destroyed a lily,
About the fire that burned a braid.
I also tell about an unmilked goat,
About the mother's unbaked dough,
About the shack covered with weeds,
I tell the world, I tell.
O forgotten neighbour's daughter,
The doll I have is safe;
The doll is with me, come
With the bus of the eastern wind.
Hanna, I do not remember your features;
I wretchedly yearn to remember;
The beat of the steps are in my heart.
A bird slowly advances or pecks
The way we were, how beautiful we were,
O, neighbour's daughter, O, Hanna,
We were.
Why are our eyes mixed with exile,
Why are our hands mixed with the
Damned mountains?

Samih al-Qassem

Love in the Palestinian Manner

I live with you in the drought with figs and olive oil,
I wear your nakedness as a perfumed dress,
I build on the rubble in your eyes, a house.
Alive, I love you, and dead I love you;
If I am hungry, I nourish myself with thyme...
I caress my face with your troubled hair,
My dust-covered face reddens —
I am an infant born in your hands.
I rise and grow bigger
And am alone taken
To be whipped by humiliation,
Beaten by whips at every police station.
However, I feel we are lovers
Who died from the ecstasy of passion,
An olive-skinned man and an olive-skinned woman;
You merge into me, I merge into you,
Delicious figs and peeled nuts,
When soldiers smash my head
And I drink the coldness of jails,
To forget you... I love you more.

Abd al-Latif 'Aqel

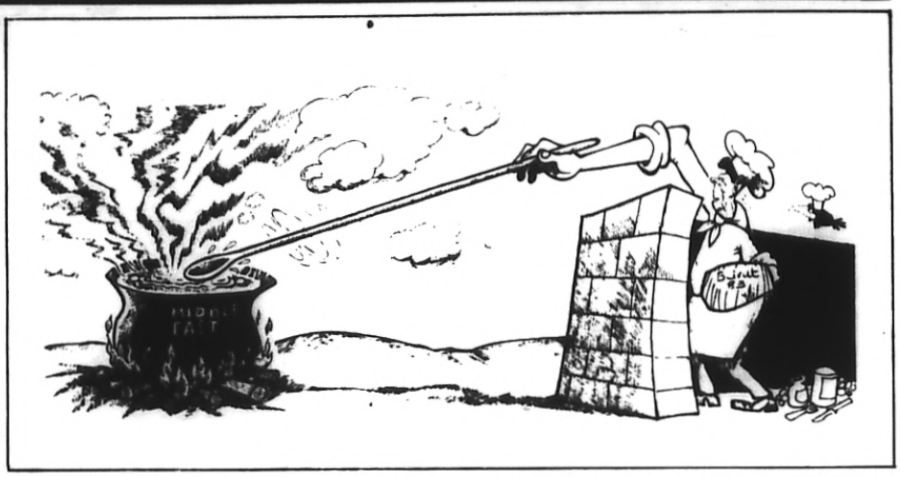
The lyrics stir a lake of sadness and pain in the Palestinian soul. However, the effect is high-spirited because of the ups and downs in tone and melody. The melody and words begin slower, then speed up and then go slower again. These ups and downs reinforce and deepen the melody's affect on the listener. Repetition of the melody is a typical characteristic in Arabic songs and a technique used by major Arab singers such as Um-Kalthoum, Abd al-Wahab, Abd al-Halim, Warda Jazaeria and others.

"The importance of Sabrin, according to foreign ears," wrote Norwegian journalist Ola Andresen, who broadcast a special radio programme on the group, "is the fact that they seem to make experiments based on traditional Arabic music and national traditions to express their daily life and their real conditions in a way that local audiences appreciate and approve of. Still, in spite of, or because of, this, they can also catch a foreign ear and sound interesting enough that one would like to hear more from them."

Ola heard them at various stages and in the recording room. He wrote: "I found that they have a genuine critical attitude for their own activities in the field of music and musical expression which they try to transform into professional work. They never end a session completely satisfied with what they have done but often through their artistical progress, break up with the artists' true impatient desire to solve a new problem. Until now, the only way they could solve these problems was through discussions, since they have no artistic director to guide them."

Sabrin, perhaps, is an example of the new musical trend in the Palestinian national traditions. Most sophisticated and mature musical troupes exist outside of the country, such as *'Ashaqeen*, in Syria, Lebanese Marcel Khalifeh, and others. Singer Mustafa al-Kurd, who was deported for several years abroad but returned to the country last year, has also made his distinguished voice famous in Palestine and among Palestinian communities abroad. ■

WINDOW ON THE ARAB PRESS



The fast-paced political movements, the oppression of residents of south Lebanon, and the continued turmoil of the local economy were the main stories in the local press this week.

Palestinian papers concentrated this week on the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement and the ramifications this agreement has had on the political spectrum. Differences in the interpretation of the agreement between PLO and Jordanian officials was given prominence.

The Israeli army's brutal actions against Lebanese residents in occupied south Lebanon were given front-page headlines. The price rise of a number of basic commodities by 25 percent and the apparent disagreement inside Israeli circles over the latest economic plan were given attention by the papers.

No Future To Collusion

The Amman accord is not a boost to the Soviet position in the Vienna talks, which is pro-Palestinian rights. The American envoy went to these negotiations carrying documents and promises from the accord that the official leadership of the PLO had agreed to the principle of "Peace for Land" instead of the principle of "Peace for an Independent Palestinian Homeland." This latter principle is included in the Soviet initiative, the 16th session of the Palestine National Council and the PNC session in Amman.

Murphy, accordingly, will rely on this and on promises by Mubarak and others that there are more concessions yet to come.

It is clear that those who volunteered to give this free service to the American administration – and think they will be rewarded for it – have miscalculated as they have done in the past.

Neither Washigton nor the Soviet Union can introduce anything to them. Washington cannot relinquish Israeli conditions, just as the Soviet Union cannot relinquish the rights of the Palestinian people.

And if supporters of the surrenderist plans think that a new factor has emerged on the ring of dealing with plans, then this factor, by which we mean the official leadership of the PLO, will not be lucky in passing any plans.

AL TALIA
February 21

The Frank Statement

Opponents of the Amman agreement are at a loss. They based their opposition on the assumption that the PLO had accepted 242 and the Reagan plan. But the Executive Committee statement belied their assumptions.

The statement reaffirmed the PLO's rejection of 242 and Reagan's plan. So, the agreement is in line with Palestinian, Arab and international legitimacy. It aims at creating a unified broad Arab position.

The opposition's insistence on ignoring this statement and continuing the call for the formation of a "broad national front" clearly runs counter to the national Palestinian march.

If these peole who are isolated in Damascus are still talking about "the framework of the PLO," then they do not know yet that they are isolated. They do not realise that the Palestinian people reject their position.

AL FAJR
February 22

Rumania's Role

Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres' current visit to Rumania and his meetings with President Ceaucescu bring to mind the special role played by Rumania in the Mideast crisis and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Despite the fact that Rumania is part of the Eastern bloc and a member of the Warsaw Alliance, it has adopted an independent line on both internal and external policies. It was the only socialist country which refused to cut off its diplomatic ties with Israel after the latter occupied Arab territories in 1967.

Thus Bucharest has remained the capital which Israeli leaders and moderate Arab leaders head for. The Rumanian government has always called for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and achieving the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and an independent state.

If Rumania, through its talks with Peres, were able to persude him to change Israel's position towards the PLO and its rejection of the idea of an international conference on Middle East peace, then it would have contributed once again to speeding up a peaceful and just settlement to the Palestinian problem.

AL QUDS
February 22

Proceeding

The masses who attended the memorial of Fahd al-Qawasmeh did so to provide his stand with momentum and new strength. They reaffirmed their adherence to the independence of the Palestinian decision and to our legitimate institutions. On this occasion, the masses of our people emphasised their adherence to the aims of the people. The occasion showed the depth of the rejection of plots against our people.

The masses of our people are once again declaring: "We are proceeding on down the road, Abu Khaled."

AL SHA AB
February 23

A Pledge To Stay On The Road

A memorial has come to mean something more than just elogising a martyr. For our people it has a new dimension derived from the struggle of our people. The well-attended memorial of Fahd al-Qawasmeh served as a renewal of the pledge to keep following the path trodden by Qawasmeh and which leads to independence.

The memorial was an occasion for our people to demonstrate their adherence to the PLO leadership under Yasir Arafat and their determination to maintain their independent decision.

AL FAJR
February 23

Why They Reject The Agreement IE

The Israeli attitude towards the Amman agreement raises many questions because it clearly moves away from real peace. While Labour tended to underestimate the agreement and find flaws in it, the Likud rejected it outright on the basis of well known ideologies stemming from denying the existence of the Palestinian people altogether.

Shimon Peres, the Israeli prime minister, tried to attack the agreement during his visit to Bucharest on the grounds that there were differences over certain issues. When it turned out that there were no differences, the debate focused on Israel's unwillingness now to settle the Palestinian cause because it is preoccupied with the economic crisis and withdrawal from Lebanon.

Yitzhak Shamir rejected the agreement because it calls for an independent Palestinian state. He also refused to negotiate with the PLO. In other words, he is against any concessions regarding the occupied territories.

So, the Likud and the Labour positions, though they seem to differ, are equal on rejecting the agreement.

Since the Israeli attitude is void of any inclination to do so, the Arab peace initiative may approach the great powers directly, through the Security Council. The present time is the most suitable for a peaceful solution.

AL QUDS
February 25

A Reading Of The Egyptian Initiative IE

Al Fajr, out of conviction of its role, its responsibility and its duty at this historic juncture, cannot let the initiative of Egyptian President Husni Mubarak go by without study and comment.

In this regard we have to emphasise that the Palestinian cause is the core of the Middle East conflict and that the right to self-determination is the core of the Palestinian cause. Also, that the PLO is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

We would like to draw the attention of the reader to the following points:

* No solution to the Palestinian problem can be achieved without PLO participation.

* The Egyptian initiative should be considered by all sincere Arabs, and through it the PLO should contribute to the peace efforts for a just and lasting peace.

* This option available to the PLO and Arab masses should not be ruled out. It should be put to the test.

* Political experience in the past, especially during efforts to convene the Geneva Conference in 1975, provided a similar way. A number of Palestinian intellectuals were to attend the conference then as representatives of the PLO and with its full approval.

* The shock caused by the Egyptian initiative makes it necessary for the Palestinian leadership to seize the initiative and make use of the available opportunity so as to move toward the desired goal of self-determination and an independent state.

AL FAJR
February 27

MECC Meeting Supports 'Peace Based on Justice'

The fourth General Assembly of the Middle East Council of Churches, meeting in Cyprus February 3-19, reaffirmed its support for the rights of the Palestinian people, the freedom of Jerusalem, the unity of Lebanon and Cyprus and the need to end the Iran-Iraq war immediately.

The assembly, which met under the slogan "Living Hope," elected three presidents for the coming session, which lasts for four years. The presidents of MECC are: Patriarch Ignatius Hazim, of the Arab Greek Orthodox patriarchate in Syria and Lebanon; Patriarch Karakein Sirkesian, the Armenian patriarch of Lebanon; and Samir Qafiti, Bishop of the Arab Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East.

The statement, issued by this large gathering of Middle Eastern church leaders, called for "unity of all the citizens of various homelands who are seeking peace based on justice" and hoped for the creation of "an atmosphere of trust and humility in order to serve the national cause and to support the weak of this earth." The Middle East Council of Churches made a vow at the end of the message to "work for freedom and justice."

The Middle East Council of Churches approved the continuation of the aid programme to Palestinians in the various host countries that started in 1951. The council also approved the continuation of their aid programme to all victims of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, irrespective of nationality or religion.

Hospice Rejects Scheme to 'Israelise' Hospital

The Israeli Ministry of Health is studying the idea of transforming Jerusalem's Old City Hospice Hospital into a medical clinic under the auspices of the Israeli Hadassah Hospital. Mordechai Gur, the Israeli minister of health, made this declaration in a special work session in the Israeli Knesset February 25. Local residents have demanded the transfer of the hospital to a local body. Tawfiq Toubi, from the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, and Mohammed Wattad, from Mapam demanded that the Israeli Ministry of Health cancel all previous measures aimed at closing the only hospital in the Old City. The Hospice Hospital provides low-price health services to poor and elderly Jerusalem residents who have no medical insurance.

Dr Ahmad Muhtadi, director of Hospice Hospital, told *Al Fajr* that the health ministry's proposal for transforming the hospital into a clinic is not accepted. The rejection of Gur's proposal was based on medical conditions. "There is no need to add another clinic to the eight clinics run by UNRWA and private institutions that are available in the Old City," Muhtadi said. "Hospice Hospital, which has three medical sections, offered medical treatment to 5992 patients in 1984." This number includes 2700 patients from Jerusalem who had no medical insurance," Muhtadi added. "It is good that the authorities have not yet decided to close the hospital."

The surgery section was officially ordered to close by last March 1, 1984. However, the hospital officials refused and the are still providing 92-bed service while the Israeli authorities provide expenses only for 50 beds.

Israeli authorities claimed that they want to change the hospital into a clinic for financial reasons. Dr Muhtadi expressed the Palestinian local institutions' willingness to privately run the hospital if the Israeli government completely abandons it. "It costs us US$1 million to run the hospital," Dr Muhtadi told *Al Fajr*. "This sum does not break a government," he added. If the government does not want to pay up, we will run the the hospital ourselves."

Nazareth Priest Barred from Territories

A Nazareth priest was recently forbidden from entering the West Bank and Gaza, *Al Fajr* has learned. Reverend Riyah Abu Assal, a Palestinian, was informed of the prohibition in an official Israeli memorandum two weeks ago. He is not to enter the occupied territories until further notice, the Reverend was told.

As part of the Progressive List for Peace delegation, Reverend Abu Assal visited PLO headquarters in Tunis in February and met with Chairman Arafat. The prohibition on travel to the occupied territories may serve to prevent Abu Assal from informing local residents of the outcome of the PLP's meeting with Arafat.

Other members of the PLP delegation that visited Tunis, including MK Mohammed Mi'ari and journalist Uri Avneri, were summoned to the police station for questioning.

The Reverend told the Israeli daily *Hadashot*, which reported the travel ban February 25, that "this is the second time Israeli authorities have restricted my movement" and that the ban is a "result of my sympathy for the Palestinian cause."

Hadashot reported that Reverend Abu Assal refuses to appeal the prohibition so that he can perform religious ceremonies in the occupied territories. If he were allowed to visit his congregation, he said, it would only be in the presence of police personnel." I refuse to perform religious ceremonies in the presence of the Israeli police," he told the paper. *(Translation: Al Sha'ab, February 26, 1985).*

On The Occasion of March 8,
International Women's Day,

The Women's Work Commitees in the Occupied Territories Present their

Sixth Annual Bazaar

At the hall of the Arab Chamber of Commerce in Jerusalem, March 3 through March 8, 1985 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm daily. Palestinian embroidery, knitting and other handmade works will be on sale. Proceeds will defray expenses of the 13 kindergartens and two nurseries run by the Women's Work Committees in the West Bank and Gaza.

Catholic Guard Killed In Repeat of 1983 Crime

The body of an Arab guard of the Catholic cemetery on Mt Zion was discovered February 20. Ibrahim Salem Qumqam, 70, had been missing since February 18 when he returned to Jerusalem from a visit to his family in Ain Arik near Ramallah.

Ibrahim Qumqam.

Police discovered Qumqam's body inside the tiny room where he works as a guard to the Latin cemetery. He had apparently been beaten by a sharp object and was locked in his room. The same cemetery has been ransacked on two different occasions since then.

On the night of Qumqam's burial February 20, the cemetery was attacked and a number of tools used for digging graves were missing. The cemetery was again ransacked February 26, with the guard's door broken and more tools taken.

Father Maroun Yonan, pastor of the Latin Church parish, told *Al Fajr* that he has no idea what the motive for the killing could have been or who was behind it. Yonan pointed out that on Christmas Eve 1983, guard Yaqoub Mousa for the same cemetery was killed in similar circumstances. Father Yonan demanded an immediate investigation and the capture of the murderers. "We hope that the police can apprehend the killers so that we can enjoy peace and quiet," he said.

The Jerusalem police announced February 26 that a suspect had been arrested in conjection with the killing but would not give any further information.

King Fahd

continued from page 5

discussing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the senior official said that of course they talked about it, and about Lebanon, Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq war and water issues.

The official said that the US goal in the Middle East, as stated by Reagan during the Fahd talks, is to bring about direct negotiations between the parties under Resolution 242. This, he continued, is to be done with a Jordanian delegation which may include "credible Palestinians," meaning, the official continued, those who would be accepted by Israel. He then said that the American government is waiting for an Arab interlocutor to sit and talk about the Reagan plan, the Fez plan, or Hussein's suggestions. It was made very clear that the Arabs must now make the next move. He also said the issue of a dialogue between the US and the PLO was not raised by the king but that the king asked the American president to use US influence with Israel in favour of peace.

This version of the story, however, was somewhat different from that presented in speeches during the welcome ceremony for King Fahd at the White House. President Reagan said, "I continue to believe that a just and lasting settlement based on UN Security Council Resolution 242 is within reach, [including] the security of Israel and its neighbours... and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people..." which should be addressed in direct negotiations. "Direct negotiations" was a phrase repeated by all American officials who spoke about a possible settlement. King Fahd said that due to no fault of their own, Palestinians became "the victims of unjust aggression" and that they should gain independence like all other Arab nations. Fahd told Reagan that the Palestinian question "is the single problem that is of paramount concern to the whole Arab nation and it affects the relationship of its peoples and countries with the outside world." King Fahd ended by saying, "I hope, Mr President, that your administration will support the just cause of the Palestinian people."

WEEKLY REVIEW

Snow fell in Jerusalem this week for the first time in two years. Most Jerusalemites had a day off and kids celebrated the happy event./AO photo

February 20, 1985

PETROL BOMB AT POLICE

RAFAH — A petrol bomb was tossed at an Israeli police patrol in Rafah in the Gaza Strip February 19 but there were no injuries, Israel Radio reported. The radio said Israeli troops sealed off the area and began a search for the attackers.

EXAM RESULTS PROTESTED

JERUSALEM — Hundreds of students sitting for the *tawjihi* (matriculation) examinations this year staged a sit-in strike at offices of the Director of Education to protest the low grades for the first semester exams.

STUDENT JAILED

DURA — The Nablus military court sentenced student Munqeth Mohammed Abu Atwan of Dura village in the Hebron district to three months in prison, seven months suspended and a IS75,000 fine on charges of stone-throwing.

ISRAELI BUS STONED

JALAZON — An Israeli Egged bus was stoned as it was passing near the Jalazon refugee camp on its way from Emmanuel settlement to Jerusalem, Israel Radio reported.

No one was injured in the incident, but a 15-year-old boy was detained for questioning.

February 21, 1985

BANNED FROM TRAVEL

RAMALLAH — Israeli authorities have banned Ramallah and al-Bireh residents from travelling to Jordan. The ban, which applies to all those whose age is under 65 years, has been in effect for at least two weeks.

2 AND 15 YEARS

NABLUS — An Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Ahmad al-Seirafi to 15 years in prison on charges of attempting to kill a person who collaborates with the Israeli authorities. The court also sentenced Mohammed Dib al-Masri of Nablus to two years in prison.

February 22, 1985

ISRAELI BUS TORCHED

JABALYA — Three assailants set fire to an Israeli bus in Jabalya camp in the Gaza Strip causing heavy damage to the bus, Israel Radio reported.

According to the report, three masked men stopped the bus near the village of Beit Hanoun, ordered its passengers to alight, and set the bus on fire. A similar incident occurred near Hebron last week.

BOMB DEFUSED

JERUSALEM — Israeli bomb sappers dismantled a bomb found at the Bab al-Asbat Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem. No injuries were reported.

DOCTOR IMPRISONED

IBILIN — The Israeli military court in Lydda sentenced physician Abdullah Khoury from the village of Ibilin near Nazareth to 15 months in prison on charges of membership in Palestinian organisations during his study in Italy.

DETAINED FOR FLAG

DABORIYEH — Israeli authorities detained Mohammed Masalhah, member of the Daboriyeh municipal council in the upper Galilee, on charges of hoisting a Palestinian flag. Israel Radio reported that Masalhah has been remanded into police custody.

February 24, 1985

KAHANE PROVOKES ARAB STUDENTS

JERUSALEM — Racist MK Rabbi Meir Kahane held a demonstration at the Hebrew University's student dormitories in Jerusalem against Arab students.

The Arab Students' Committee, together with various anti-fascist student movements at the university, have begun contacts to stage a counter-demonstration against the racist rabbi and his followers.

JENIN EMPLOYEES' SALARIES HALTED

Jordanian authorities in Amman have stopped payment of salaries to 75 employees of the Jenin municipality until further notice.

NAJAH EXHIBIT

NABLUS — The Students Unity Faction at Najah University in Nablus organised a national book exhibit which includes various books on the Palestinian cause, international progressive literature, and paintings by famous Palestinian artists.

A special section of the exhibition includes cassettes with national songs.

LONG-TERM PRISONER RELEASED

NAHF — Israeli authorities released political detainee Said Hamadeh Issa from the Galilee village of Nahf after he served a 15-year jail sentence on charges of membership in a Palestinian organisation, possession of weapons and recruiting others for the organisation.

14-YEAR-OLD JAILED FOR STONES

NABLUS — Nablus military court sentenced Imad al-Din Kalboneh, 14, of Nablus to two months in prison, three years suspended and a IS70,000 fine on charges of stone-throwing and incitement.

February 26, 1985

BOMBS IN OLD CITY

JERUSALEM — Two explosive charges were found at the New Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem. The two bombs were safely dismantled by police sappers.

Last week a bomb was found at St Stephen's Gate in the Old City. It was also defused by the police.

CURFEW IN NABLUS; SOLDIER INJURED

NABLUS — Israeli troops clamped a curfew on Faisal Street in Nablus after an Israeli military bus passing near the city's old market was stoned. Several windows of the bus were smashed and one Israeli soldier was injured and needed to be hospitalised.

Troops combed the area, rounding up scores of youths and merchants whose stores are in the vicinity. The curfew continued until 2:00 p.m., during which time Israeli patrols stalked the Old City of Nablus.

FREIJ RECEIVES ITALIANS

BETHLEHEM — Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij received a visiting delegation of Italian parliamentarians and briefed them on the situation in the occupied territories.

He also explained the problem of Jewish settlement, which is causing much harm to Arab residents.

The head of the Italian delegation expressed his full support for the rights of the Palestinian people and condemned Israeli settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

COURT REJECTS LAND APPEAL

RAMALLAH — The Israeli High Court has dismissed an appeal by residents of the Ramallah district whose lands are threatened with expropriation.

The court accepted the prosecutor's version that the lands were vital for security because they are located on a hill overlooking army camps.

16-YEAR-OLD JAILED 3 YEARS

NABLUS — Nablus military court sentenced 16-year-old Ra'ed Yousef Shibaro to three years in prison and two years suspended on charges of throwing a petrol bomb and membership in an illegal organisation.

Rabbi Levinger leaves Dheisheh refugee camp under an umbrella of Israeli soldiers after a four-month publicity stake-out.

West Bank

continued from page 1

in Moscow February 27 the government's official news agency Tass said that Egypt's proposal allows the US to pressure Jordan into rejecting the proposed international conference for peace in the Middle East.

Israeli Reaction

The Mubarak initiative received mixed reaction from the Israeli government. Likud members in the coalition government called the initiative a "ploy" while Labour ministers said that the Mubarak proposal was a serious move for peace. Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who is currently on a visit to Holland, told reporters that the Egyptian proposal "doesn't help the peace process." Back in Tel Aviv, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres described the initiative as "a new attempt to reach a lasting peace in the area." The right-wing Tehiya Party opposed any negotiations over the land of "*Eretz* Israel."

The Israeli Hebrew daily *Yediot Aharanot* published the names of Palestinians who it claimed were nominated by Egyptian President Mubarak to participate in the talks. The list included Professors Edward Said, Hisham Sharabi and Walid Khalidi, all residing in the US and, in the West Bank, Anwar Khatib, Anwar Nusseibeh, Rashad Shawwa, Hikmat Masri, Elias Freij, Hilmi Hanoun, Karim Khalaf and Mustafa Natshe.

US Reaction

In Washington the Reagan administration described the current steps as "the beginning of an Arab world process," but said that it is "too soon for the US to be entering directly into the process." Robert Pelletreau, deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, gave the assessment February 26 in response to questions from the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East.

PLO Reaction

Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad), a prominent member of Fatah's Central Committee, attacked the Egyptian initiative and said that it indicates "Egyptian-Jordanian-American and Israeli coordination, at the expense of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people." Khalaf said the initiative means putting all the cards in US hands and distancing the Soviet Union, which he called "the Arabs' friend." PLO Executive Committee member Mohammed Milhem, the exiled mayor of Halhoul, called the Egyptian initiative "unacceptable."

Mr. Mohammed Mi'ari from the Progressive List for Peace said in an interview with Arabic *Al Fajr*, "If the initiative is aimed at bypassing the PLO, the international conference and excluding the Soviet Union, then it is bound to fail."

The Israeli Communist Party came out strongly against the Mubarak initiative. In their editorial February 27, *Al Ittihad*, the party's official daily, said they hoped "our people will be able to defeat this new camp Reagan, Mubarak, Hussein and Peres without having to pay what they paid in the Lebanon war as the result of the first camp — Carter, Sadat, Begin and Bashir Gemayel."

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which had been seeking closer relations with Fatah since the Amman PNC divisions, also strongly criticised the Egyptian president's statements. The DFLP statement said that the Egyptian move reveals the core of the February 11 Jordanian-Palestinian agreement which, they said, called for giving Jordan the mandate to negotiate with Israel on the basis of UN resolution 242.

George Habash, secretary-general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, called for efforts to defeat the agreement, which he said was aimed at "undermining the achievements of the Palestinian people, the most important of which is the PLO." Habash called on Palestinians to form a wide front that will work for the "defeat of the surrenderist policies."

CALENDAR

At the Nuzha/El-Hakawati Theatre, East Jerusalem. Tel: 280957

March 2 — 7:00 pm

Art Exhibit: *Palestinian and Israeli Artists Against Occupation and for Freedom of Expression*, open daily from 4:00 — 7:00. until March 16.

March 3 & 5 — 7:00 pm

New Theatre Production: *From the Source to Sorrow*, Hakawati Theatre troupe's newest production. (Arabic, English translation available.)

At the Tantour Ecumenical Institute, Bethlehem Road.

March 5 — 4:30 pm

Lecture: *"The Way to Unity Through the Heart of the Afflicted,"* by Jean Vanier. (English, with simultaneous translations to Arabic and French.)

March 7 — 4:30 pm

Lecure: *"Commentary on the Parables of Jesus,"* by Dr Luise Schottrof. (English, with simultaneous translations to Arabic and French.)

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Weathers

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towns. Israel has not issued one permit to Palestinians under its occupation to dig new wells or even to tap into the existing artesian wells because it might disrupt the flow of the aquifers. Israeli authorities also limit the quantity of water West Bank farmers can use every year and the amount of vegetables they can plant. Majed Dajani, who in addition to being a meteorologist is also a farmer, told *Al Fajr* that every farm in the Jericho area is required to have a water metre to monitor the exact amount of water a farmer uses. The farmers can only use a specified amount of water every year, which the Israelis calculate on an average of three years of farmers' water use. According to Dajani, many complained that this distribution of water was not fair because in one of the years considered in the measurement, some farmers used less water or did not cultivate all their land. The law, however, passed and the farmers must abide by it unless they want to be prosecuted by a military court. Heavy sentences are levied against farmers who are caught using more water than their quota.

Geopolitics

The Israeli Citizens' Rights Movement (CRM) submitted a report to Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin February 14 that publicised this issue of West Bank water. The report complained that Palestinians are discriminated against because they are not allowed to dig deep wells and they are not given a fair share of the available water while Jewish settlers in the area are allowed to dig deep wells and have total control over their water sources. *The Jerusalem Post* reported that when he met the CRM delegation the same day, Rabin told them: "The government will not permit development projects in Judea and Samaria and the Gaza district that might compete with Israeli enterprises."

Some observers even believe that the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the 1978 Lebanon invasion (called after south Lebanon's most important river, the Litani operation) were started over water access. Worried about Arab neighbours' attempts to change the flow of some of the rivers that filled its reservoirs, Israel launched its air and land attack in 1967 to guarantee that most of the headwaters feeding into Israel would come under its control. The Banias River in the Golan Heights, for example, is one important Jordan River headwater that came under Israeli control after 1967. Israel's annexation of the Golan in 1981 was allegedly intended to guarantee that this important headwater would not be returned to Syria. And since Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, Israel has already built top-secret water diversion facilities on the Litani and its tributaries to ensure continuing war spoils.

Israel's obsession with water also prompted it to look for ways to increase rainfall. Israel currently uses techniques to force clouds that are known to have a saturation of water to release all the water they carry. Referred to as "milking the cloud," this method requires that all the conditions for rain be present and that some rain be falling at the time. The cloud is then sprayed with silver iodide, which stimulates rainfall. This method, which is extremely costly, is used only when there is a great need for water. Israel also does not "milk the clouds" until they are located over specific farms that need rain. This method has never been used over any Palestinian-owned farms.

The technique of "milking the clouds" is actually only a man-made replica of a natural process of mineral-induced rain condensation. Rain is usually caused by a cold front meeting a warm front when there is low pressure in the atmosphere. Clouds saturated with water particles that evaporated from the surface of the earth during the summer are then formed at low altitudes. A high mineral content in the evaporation at the upper level of the atmosphere helps bring the water particles together to form raindrops.

Because of its minerals, evaporation from the Dead Sea is particularly useful for stimulating rain. Unfortunately for the Jordan Valley area, though, most of the evaporation from the Dead Sea is carried eastward to Jordan with the clouds, and the rain ends up falling on hilly areas away from the original source of evaporation.

Meteorology Important to West Bank Farmers

Farmers and architects in the West Bank are the ones who most often call the meteorological centres to check on the weather conditions. Farmers want to find out which area receives more rain and how the rainfall is distributed. They also want to find out wind direction to decide on planting seeds. Architects are concerned with finding out weather information to time construction stages.

The West Bank meteorological centres measure wind direction in two ways. From its location 1005 metres above sea level, the Hebron centre registers the direction of wind using wind detecting devices. At the Jericho center, wind direction is registered using helium-inflated balloons that are fired into the atmosphere every day. The direction the balloon floats in detects the wind direction. Jericho's measurements are particularly important for meteorologists worldwide because the Dead Sea area is the lowest inland depression in the world and it is protected from wind by the mountain ranges that border it from the west.

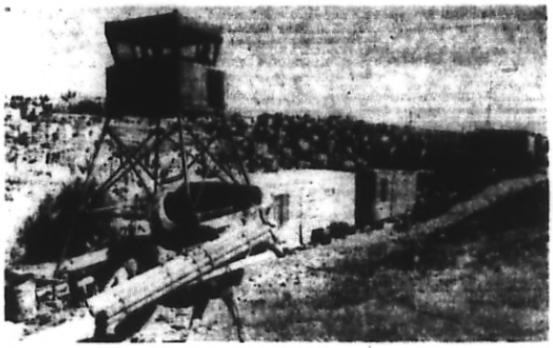
While meteorologists are trying to predict weather changes the scientific way the Palestinian farmer figured out ways to detect the weather conditions long ago. These ways are reflected in some of the Arabic sayings about rain. For example, one says that the month of March is when seven big snow storms occur. In another one, March talks to February, telling it that "three from you and four from me will have the old woman and her sheep singing and dancing in the valley" meaning that the last three days in February and the first four in March are rainy days for the sheep to drink and the grass to grow.

Meanwhile, more rain is being predicted before this winter is over. Farmers and cattle raisers are pleased at these predictions since this will mean plenty of water for the dry summer months. The rest of the Palestinian population will also be pleased because plentiful rain means juicier olives and more olive oil. Because of the bad winter last year, the amount of olive oil produced in the West Bank was low compared to previous years. As a result, the price of a five-gallon container of Palestinian olive oil soared from under US$70 the previous year to over US$100 this year. Palestinians, for whom olive oil is as essential as bread and water, hope the recent rains will mean more olive oil next year — at lower prices. ■

P.S. After this report was filed, the area was hit by a severe rain and snow storm. By press time, rainfall had already been calculated above the yearly average. More rain is still expected.

Tel Rumeida Settlers 'Dig In' with Government Blessings

Yehuda Litani visited Tel Rumeida in Hebron, the site settlers have trained their sights on most eagerly of late, and wrote this report for the Hebrew daily *HaAretz*.



Israeli army watchtower at Tel Rumeida in Hebron: a strategic spot to watch over the whole city.

To an outsider, it's nothing more than a motly jumble of pre-fabs and dilapidated trailers crammed in between a bunch of stone houses, peach and almond trees and wandering vines. Its depressing visage is augmented by a wobbly army watchtower, a group of bored soldiers chewing the fat in a jeep parked up the hill, and the roving hostility in the eyes of the Arab children of the neighbourhood. Can this be what all the fuss is about? Three or four settler families, a few children running to and fro between the trailers, and scores of soldiers positioned around the site — among the Arab houses, beside the fence, and in the nearby vineyards?

All the same, the settlers' Arab neighbours are worried; you can see it in their eyes. They have a dark suspicion that "this is only the beginning," a notion that the settlers would probably be the first to confirm. For humble and pitiful as the settlement at Tel Rumeida may be, it's not all that different from the beginnings of Kiryat Arba — in Hebron's Park Hotel, and later — in the military government compound, and finally — in Kiryat Arba itself. The same holds true for the settlers' first foothold in the area of the Tomb of the Patriarchs in the late 1960s; it didn't take them long before they had gained access to the tomb itself, the old Jewish cemetery, Beit Hadassah, and the vegetable market.

All of the Jewish settlements in and around Hebron had modest beginnings. But bit by bit, thanks to their Knesset lobby and through the exertion of pressure on the government they began to dig in and with the help of "our friends" in the Likud, the National Religious Party Tehiya — and the Labour Alignment their settlements began to burgeon. But the settlers didn't rely solely on the Knesset lobby operating on their behalf; the establishment of *faits accomplis* on the ground was an integral part of their praxis. Acting without authorisation and in contravention of the law they staged midnight incursions into areas and buildings in Hebron and did their utmost to exploit political and security tensions on the West Bank to their benefit. And "securing the safety of the settlers" basically meant obtaining more and more houses and plots of land — at first in and around Kiryat Arba, and later, in the heart of Hebron.

A Bevy of Official Patrons

They were never short of patrons: both Yigal Allon and Shlomo Hillel were among their early political benefactors; Dr Yosef Burg has been in the picture from the start; after 1977, Menachem Begin, Ariel Sharon, David Levy, and Moshe Arens all played patron to the Hebron settlers until the Likud was shoved out of power in 1984. Arens was the one who gave the settlers the written and oral authorisation they needed to occupy a small plot of land at Tel Rumeida. It was during the twilight of the Likud government — and although the plot was situated smack-dab in the middle of an Arab neighbourhood — that the settlers moved onto the site and quickly established "facts on the ground." However, in spite of Arens' authorisation, the move was never sanctioned by the government.

In September 1984, Professor Yuval Ne'eman notified the government that "work is getting under way in Hebron for the construction and habitation of areas owned by Jews in keeping with the government decision of 1980." Moshe Arens, who at the time was the minister of defence, had given his written authorisation, and Yuval Ne'eman, in his capacity as the deputy chairperson of the ministerial settlement committee, notified the government of the move after a sitting of the committee — which he alone attended.

In the meantime, the settlers had been pressing Ms Plia Albeck, of the Ministry of Justice's land claims department, to grant them the authorisation they so desperately wanted. But when she did give them the go-ahead, it was only for plot 67, the site on which their trailers and pre-fabs are located at present. The settlers pressed for more, but they were not successful.

After occupying plot 67, it quickly became clear that the settlers were occupying an archaeological site. Back in 1944, the British mandate government declared Tel Rumeida an archaeological site and slated it for preservation. Yitzhak Magen, the civil administration's archaeological supervisor, has admitted that he allowed the settlers to occupy the site — but only after pressure had been exerted upon him.

Oblivious to Past and Present

Archaeologists from the universities of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem were called in and, after examining the area, reported the settlers were causing a great deal of damage to the site and perhaps to many of the as yet unearthed archaeological remains buried in the mound. According to Israel's leading archaeologist, Binyamin Mazar, Tel Rumeida is the most important archaeological mound in the area, dating back to the days of the patriarchs. He went on to say that any construction work there would cause irreparable damage.

But the findings of the archaeologists did not make an impression on the settlers. If by laying cement foundations for their pre-fabs and trailers and digging cesspits they damaged archaeological artifacts, they did so without batting an eyelash. Moreover, they have been harassing their Arab neighbours, trying to make their lives so miserable that they will pack up and leave.

At first the settlers played cops and robbers with the soldiers stationed at the site, sneaking in new trailers under the cover of darkness or surreptitiously putting up fences in disputed areas. But all their subterfuges were nipped in the bud by the army, and the trailers were removed and the fences dismantled.

The national unity government decided to preserve the *status quo*, and, in contrst to the situation during the final days of the Likud government, it did not allow the settlers to make any unauthorised lightning moves. Hence, the settlers have reverted to the tactics employed during the first years of the settlement drive in Hebron — with a vengence.

It's not simply a matter of putting up fences and watching the army dismantle them. Two weeks ago the settlers cut down trees in a neighbouring plot they've had their eye on. Abd al-Aziz Abu Heikal, whose 27 trees were cut down, told me: "They came before daybreak and sawed down the trees I had planted a number of years ago. Trees are like children, but instead of letting them grow, they came along and cut them down!... When I came to my plot in the morning I thought I would faint. What's going on here? Is this how they want to live with us? The trees were scattered all over. They looked like dead people and I just stood there and cried."

Two settlers from Tel Rumeida were arrested last week on suspicion of having cut down the trees, but the police don't have much evidence, save for a saw found in the possession of one of the suspects. There's reason to speculate that, like in so many other cases of settler vandalism against the Arab residents of Hebron, in the end the case will be closed without anybody being charged.

Side-Stepping Legality

Abd al-Aziz Abu Heikal led me through his vineyard to a building in the middle of his plot. "This is an old mosque," he said. "We've always considered it a Muslim shrine. Then along came the settlers, claiming it is Jesse's tomb. [Jesse was the father of King David.] What can we do? They'll come here and claim it and the soldiers will stand guard over them. You people in Israel think that the army is here to prevent the settlers from trespassing on my property — but you're wrong! Today, [Wednesday, February 13] an Israeli TV crew was here. What do you think they filmed? The trees? No such luck. They filmed the settlers' shacks and didn't bother to so much as exchange a word with us."

One of the reserve soldiers who recently did his yearly stint at Tel Rumedia told me this week, "Me and the other guys in the unit had never served in a heavily populated area before. All of a sudden, they sent us to guard four families, and the lot of us — no matter if we were supporters of the Labour Alignment, the Likud, or Tehiya — turned dovish. We didn't know what settlers were. I mean, we'd read about them in the paper and all, and some of the guys were gung-ho advocates of the 'greater land of Israel,' but after our experience in Hebron, we started to reconsider our political ideas."

In the last edition of *Nekuda* [the settlers' journal], there's an article entitled "Escalating the Struggle for Tel Rumeida" in which, among other things, the author writes: "The committee's activists say that if the government's policy does not change soon, they will have to take the initiative in implementing government decisions." And they've already made good their threat.

But the story doesn't end with the Tel Rumeida settlement, which they claim was authorised by the government. Last week both Prime Minister Peres and Police Minister Bar-Lev spoke out against the Tel Rumeida settlement. Bar-Lev termed it an act of "impudence and insolence" — remarks that put the settlers in Hebron on their guard. Their response will probably be a concerted offensive to prove that even under a (partially) hostile government, they can continue and even increase their hold on the site, whether it is illegal or not. The Hebron settlers have experienced similar periods in the past and have sidestepped legality without any qualms more than once.

No One Punishes Settlers

"The height of their impudence," Abd al-Aziz Abu Heikal told me this week, "was on Wednesday. The civil administration gathered the 43 Arab families living at Tel Rumeida — all legal owners of land plots there - and the archaeological supervisor informed us that from now on we wouldn't be allowed to make any changes in the area — be it the erection of fences, the planting of trees, or the building of homes — because it's an archaeological site. Who didn't they inform? The Jewish settlers, that's who. They don't care, and no one will punish them if they plant trees or cut them down for that matter. And they'll live here — on my plot — and build their homes on top of the trees they cut down and no one will say a word." (Translation: HaAretz, February 15, 1985). ■